

WILD WEST

WEEKLY

A MAGAZINE CONTAINING STORIES, SKETCHES ETC OF WESTERN LIFE.

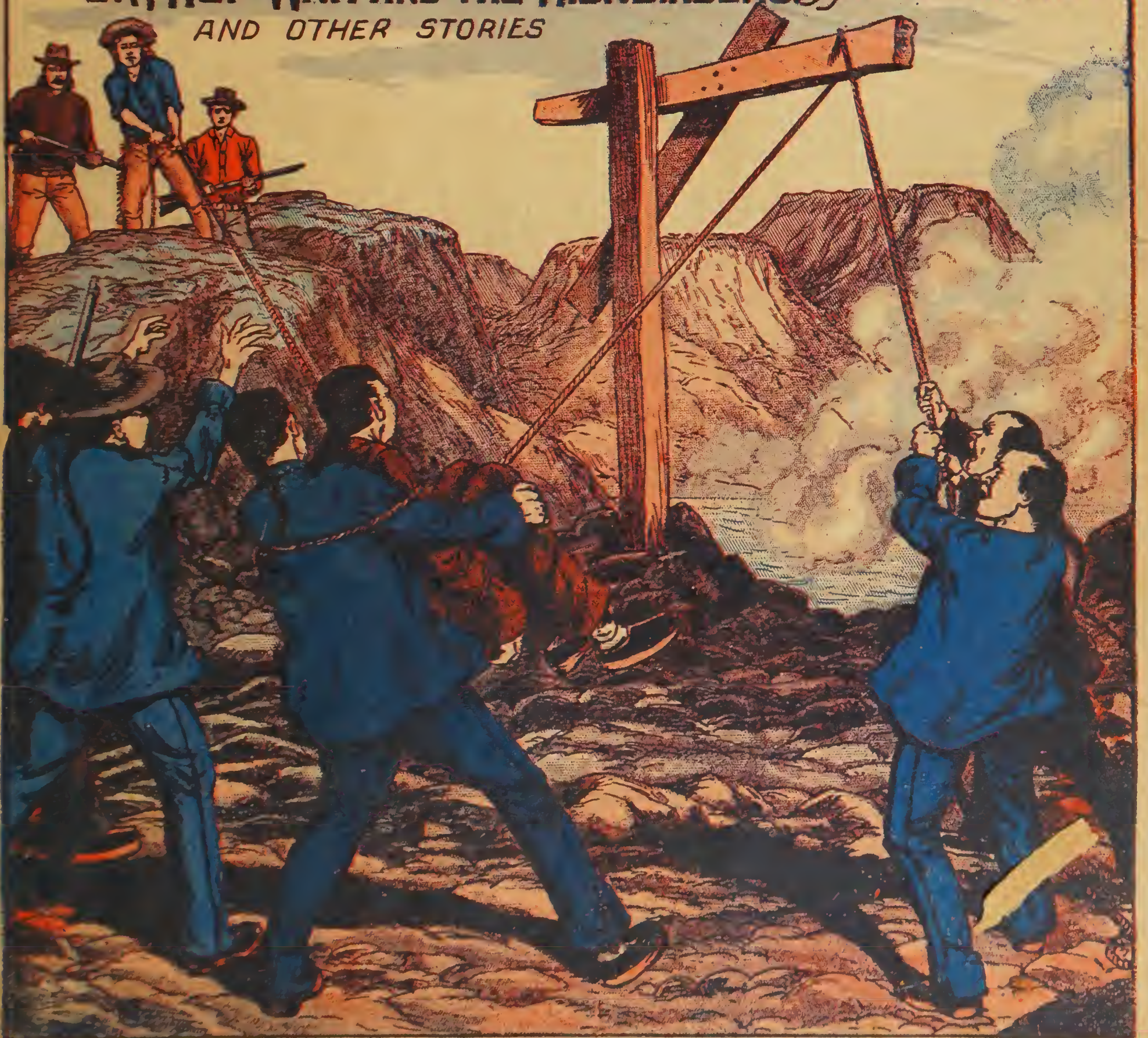
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YOUNG WILD WEST AT BOILING BUTTE; OR, HOP WAH AND THE HIGHBINDERS. *By AN OLD SCOUT.* AND OTHER STORIES



As the Highbinders flung the rope over the beam Hop Wah let out a shrill scream for help. His cry did not go unheeded, for the next instant Wild and his partners appeared and a lasso whizzed through the air.

WILD WEST WEEKLY

A Magazine Containing Stories, Sketches, Etc., of Western Life

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Young Wild West at Boiling Butte

—OR—

HOP WAH AND THE HIGHBINDERS

By AN OLD SCOUT

CHAPTER I.

WHO THE IRISHMAN FELL IN WITH.

"Hey, there! You haythen Chinee! What did ye shoot that snake fur? I was jest after gittin' a stick to pound the thing in a jelly! I have a great mind to knock your two almond eyes into one, begob!"

"Ilishman talkee allee samee fool! Me killee snake; then snake no bitee. Me shootee stlaight, allee samee Young Wild West."

"Well, begob! Ye did shoot putty straight; but ye killed the crawlin' reptile when I was after gittin' ready to do ther job meself. I don't like it, an' as sure as me name is Con Carney I'm goin' to swat ye one in ther face fur it! Git ready, ye yaller spalpeen; I'll show ye how an Irishman can foight!"

"Me no likee fightee; me shootee likee bully boy with um glasse eye, but me no fightee. Me hurte Ilishman if he makee fightee."

"Oh, ye will, will ye? Ye hurt ther Irishman, eh? Well, jis' take that, an' tell me how ye loike it!"

As the last words were uttered by a stocky-built man of twenty-five he struck out with his right fist with the intention of knocking the Chinaman, who stood before him, into smithereens.

But the blow missed the spot where it was aimed for on account of the Chinaman dropping to the ground suddenly.

Before the Irishman knew why it was that he had failed to hit the "haythen Chinee," as he called him, he felt a vicious bump against the pit of his stomach and down he went, gasping for breath.

"Me no likee fightee; when Ilishman wantee fightee me makee sit down an behavee, allee same goodee lillie boy, in um 'Flisco Sunday-school," said the Chinaman, with a smile that was "child-like and bland."

"Oh! Oh!" groaned the man on the ground, for he certainly had received a knockout from the Celestial's head, and it was safe to say that some minutes would elapse before he would feel like making good his threat to knock the Chinaman's two eyes into one.

The scene was a wild and picturesque spot in the mountains of western Nevada, and the time a few years ago, when things were in a rather unsettled state in that portion of the wild West.

Con Carney, the Irishman, had come West to seek his fortune.

After landing in America he had worked on a farm in the East until he got enough money to pay his way out to Nevada, which at that time seemed to be the Mecca of gold-seekers.

Carney had purchased a horse and prospecting outfit at Lovelocks, a little town on the Union Pacific Railroad, and

then started West, with the firm conviction that he was going to strike it rich before many days and then be able to send enough money to Ireland to bring a pretty blue-eyed colleen on.

Then he meant to become a happy benedict and go into politics, providing such things existed in Nevada.

It was near the close of the third day out from Lovelocks, and the Irishman had not met a human being or rested his eyes upon anything that had the least appearance of a human habitation.

As he was riding along with his tired horse at a walk, he suddenly saw an ugly-looking snake coiled right in the center of the deer-path he had been following for the past few minutes.

Con Carney hated snakes.

He decided to kill this one.

He was armed with a rifle, revolver and knife, but he did not attempt to use either of them upon the snake.

He was not a good enough shot to take such a risk, he thought.

So he backed his horse from the coiled reptile and dismounted.

Then he hastened to find a stick that would be suitable to despatch the snake.

It was while he was cutting a thin sapling that the report of a revolver sounded, and, turning, he saw the snake writhing in the throes of death.

Then he looked off to the right and saw a Chinaman standing within ten feet of the reptile, a smoking revolver in his hand.

The Irishman did not like this interference on the part of the Celestial, and hence the conversation and rather short fight that has just been described.

Con Carney sat still on the ground for at least three minutes holding his hands to the pit of his stomach and not saying a word.

The Chinaman stood near the dead snake and smiled in what might have been called a foolish or innocent way.

"Me helpee Ilishman to gittee up; me no wantee hurtee," he observed, stepping over and taking Carney by the arms.

"Begob! but you're a wonder, ye haythen! I fale sorry that I was after tryin' to hit ye. There! Now I fale better. What are ye after bein' around here for, anyhow?"

"Me campee backe lillie way with Young Wild West; me takee walkee so havee dlink whisky. Ilishman likee whisky?"

"Does a fish like to swim? Does an Irishman love his native sod? Does a Dutchman like Limburger cheese? Why, you haythen, ye ought to be after knowin' better than to ax me that question! Where is the whisky?"

The Celestial smilingly produced a pint bottle from the folds of his loose-fitting gown.

It was full to the stopper almost.

"This allee Chinaman got; me havee some more, but me dlinkee allee up. Ilishman takee dlink."

Con Carney did not need a second invitation.

He seized the bottle and removed the cork in double-quick time.

The pull he took was a long one, and when he breathed a sigh of satisfaction and handed it back half the contents of the bottle had vanished.

"Ilishman takee putty good dlink," commented the Celestial. "Me takee rest and then allee gone."

He swallowed the balance and then tossed the bottle over by the dead snake.

"So ye shot ther snake with your pistol, begob!" exclaimed Carney, looking admiringly at the Chinaman. "I didn't know a haythen knew how to shoot. I've seen more of ye kind since I've been in Nevady than I ever dreamed there was of Chinese. You are not loike the rest av ye troibe, begob! What is your name?"

"Me Hop Wah."

"Hop Wah, eh? Well, that is a funny name! I am Con Carney, an' I was after comin' West to make me fortune. I haven't started in yet, but I am ready to at any toime. Did ye say ye was camped somewhere near by?"

"Yes. Campee over there," and Hop Wah pointed to the left. "Me takee Ilishman to campee; gittee horse."

Carney hastened to obey.

Then leading the tired steed, which was a pretty bony one, he followed the Chinaman through the bushes and presently came in sight of a camp.

It was located on the shore of a little lake that was almost surrounded by a thick growth of willows, while here and there a cottonwood tree showed up, with the dark green of the pines of the upland looming up in the background.

There were two tents in the camp close together, and turned out to graze were eight horses and two mules, one of which was a rather small one strongly resembling a burro.

There were just six people gathered at the camp, and they looked surprised when they saw the Chinaman approaching with his newly-found friend.

"Who have you got with you, Hop?" asked a handsome, dashing young fellow of perhaps twenty, stepping forward, as the Irishman came to a halt and looked curiously at the party.

"Me killee snake for um Ilishman; then me bringee to camp. He namee Con Carney; putty goodee Ilishman, so be."

"Ah! So you think he is pretty good, eh? Well, he looks as though he might not be the worst person in the world. How are you, Mr. Con Carney, if that is your name?"

"That is me name, begob! An' I'm moighty glad to make your acquaintance—ye can belave me when I say it," was the Irishman's reply.

"I do believe you. I have a way of reading people's faces, you know, and I can tell by yours that you are an honest fellow. I'll wager that you came West to get rich, too!"

"How can ye tell that, sor?" and Carney looked very much puzzled.

"Easy enough. But never mind. Are you alone—I mean were you traveling alone when Hop came across you?"

"Yes, sor. I left ther little town called Lovelocks three days ago, an' I've been travelin' ever since without seein' a face till I come upon the haythen a few minutes ago. Ye are a foine-lookin' young feller, sor! The foineest I ever see, sor."

"Thank you! But don't give me any of your blarney. You are welcome to stop with us, if that is your desire."

"It is my desoire, sor. But won't ye introjuce yesilf? I fale a little strange, especially as there be ladies here, which is what I niver expected to see in this woild wilderness, begob!"

"I was just going to tell you who we are, Mr. Carney. To begin with, I am Young Wild West. Now you know me, so we'll shake hands."

They did shake, and the grip that the Irishman received made him wince.

"Ye have very strong fingers, begob, Young Wild West!" he exclaimed.

"You think so, eh?" and the young fellow smiled. "Well, now I will make you acquainted with the rest, and I guess they will all be glad to know you. An Irishman out on the wilds of Nevada is not a common thing, you know. The tall man there is Cheyenne Charlie. He is an old scout, and he has shot more Indians than you have got fingers and toes. He——"

"Hold on!" interrupted Carney. "Is it a fact, sor, that he has killed Intuna?"

"Yes, he did it when he had to, to save his own life. Now, the young fellow cleaning the rifle over there is Jim Dart. He has also shot a few redskins in his day, and he is ready to do more of it, providing the occasion demands it. Commencing with the one on the left, the young ladies you see are Miss Arietta Murdock, Miss Eloise Gardner and Mrs. Cheyenne Charlie. Shake hands with all of them, for I know they are glad to meet an Irishman, as well as myself."

Con Carney was not a bit backward in doing as he was told.

But there was not the least bit of boldness on his part.

His was true politeness and he turned as red as a beet when he found that the ladies had not the least objection to taking his proffered hand.

Right here it will be well to give a brief description of Young Wild West and his companions.

Young Wild West was a wealthy young mine owner, who had his main headquarters at a town called Weston, which was situated in the Black Hills.

He was probably the best known character that ever came before the eyes of the public of the great wild West.

Having earned the title of the Champion Deadshot of the West, and being commonly known among his many friends as the Prince of the Saddle, he was surely one whom a stranger would be glad to call a friend.

Daring, cool in times of danger and ever ready to protect the weak and punish the guilty, he traveled about the West in search of fortune and adventure, usually taking with him those who have been introduced to the Irishman.

Young Wild West was nothing more than a boy in looks, though he was of medium height and build and as strong and agile as any man he had ever met.

He wore a neat-fitting suit of buckskin that was trimmed with scarlet fringe, and with his long chestnut hair hanging over his shoulders he showed up as a true son of the mountains and plains of the wild West.

Cheyenne Charlie, the scout, was a tall, rather slim man with a bronzed face and long black hair and mustache. He was attired in similar fashion to Young Wild West, as was the other boy, who bore the name of Jim Dart.

Dart did not wear his hair long, but his every other appearance indicated that he had been born and reared in that part of the country.

Arietta Murdock was the pretty sweetheart of Young Wild West. She was golden-haired, and her blue eyes had a look in them which told plainly that she could take care of herself in times of danger.

Eloise Gardner, the sweetheart of Jim Dart, was in direct contrast to her, since she was of the brunette type and rather timid.

The third of the ladies was Anna, the wife of Cheyenne Charlie, who was probably twenty-five and very good looking.

These were the people Hop Wah had brought the fortune-hunting Irishman to, and Con Carney felt that at last he had found people he could admire and like in the great mining country of the West.

Young Wild West and his friends were on their way to Boiling Butte, which was less than two days' ride from where they were now camped.

They had heard about a rich find in gold ore at Boiling Butte, and always being ready to try their luck, they had come to that part of Nevada, riding the majority of the distance on horseback.

But they were used to traveling about this way and always went provided in the way of an outfit.

Hop Wah, the Chinaman, was the trusted servant of Young Wild West.

He could be depended upon to do his work, but he had a way of getting under the influence of whisky whenever he got a good chance.

As this was against the rules of our hero, he was compelled to drink on the sly.

But notwithstanding this failing of the Chinaman, he was a real wonder in his way.

He could perform a variety of tricks, and when he found anyone to gamble with he was sure to take all they had if they would stick to him.

But to look at him he was only a plain, every-day, desuised "Chinee."

Young Wild West and his friends were always glad to be accommodating to anyone they thought was deserving of it.

And not one of them thought that the Irishman was not deserving.

So they welcomed him to their camp and invited him to partake of the supper that the girls had just prepared.

Carney thanked them again and again and assured them that when he got rich and got his colleen over from Ireland he should invite them to the wedding.

The sun was not yet down when they party sat down to a wholesome meal, and when they finished the Irishman was in a very jolly frame of mind, indeed.

"Good provender to ate is bound to make a man fale good, begob!" he declared.

When he saw that Cheyenne Charlie lighted a pipe he took a black, short-stemmed clay from his pocket and filled and lighted it.

"A smoke is a foine thing after a good male," he said, smiling complacently.

It had been a rather warm day, but as the sun sank the air got cooler.

Our friends were just about settling down to enjoy a pleasant evening when the sounds made by wagon wheels came to their ears.

The next minute a score of rough-looking men, some of whom were riding horses and some riding in a covered wagon that was drawn by a mule team came in view.

"They're a bad lot, or I'm no judge!" commented Cheyenne Charlie.

CHAPTER II.

WHAT HAPPENED TO THUNDERING IKE AND HIS GANG.

The men came right on up, almost as though they had not yet seen those occupying the camp.

"Whoa!" cried the beetle-browed fellow, who was evidently the leader of the crowd; "I reckon we've arrove, boys. Out of ther saddle with yer! We're goin' ter have supper in a jiffy now!"

Down he slid from the back of his horse, conspicuous in a striped flannel shirt and a pair of blue trousers that had surely been the property of a soldier at one time.

"Whoa!" called out the driver of the mule team.

They were all at a halt now, and those who were mounted lost no time in leaving the saddle.

Young Wild West had sized them up pretty well by this time.

He could readily see that they were a bad lot.

That they were a crowd of miners on their way to the diggings was quite evident by the implements that could be seen in the wagon.

As the burly-looking fellow in the striped shirt walked up and calmly surveyed the camp, our hero thought it about time to say something.

"Well, what is the matter with you fellows?" he coolly asked.

"What's that, you young galoot?" cried the fellow, looking surprised. "Did I hear yer say somethin'?"

"I guess you did, if you are not deaf," Wild answered, still acting as though it was only a mere form he was going through. "I want to know what you fellows want. You have stopped here just as though you owned this particular spot and was going to take possession of it."

"An' that is jest kerzactly what we're goin' ter do," was the reply. "You'd better be careful how you talk to me, too, young feller! I'm a bad man when I git riled. I might take a notion ter chaw you all up!"

"Oh, I guess you won't do anything like that."

"What!" cried the man. "Why, I'm Thunderin' Ike! If yer never heard of me it's high time yer knowed me. Thunderin' Ike is my name, an' when I tells anyone ter do a thing they jest goes an' does it, or else they turns up their toes in a hurry!"

Young Wild West smiled at this.

He had met many men of the fellow's calibre before, and he was ready to give him the surprise of his life.

A blustering bad man was only "pie," as Cheyenne Charlie put it.

Thundering Ike seemed to be a bit puzzled over the way he was received, but he was working a big bluff, and he meant to carry it through.

"Boys," said he, "I reckon there's plenty of grub in this camp. Jest git in an' help yourselves! Don't tech ther wimmin folks, but if any of ther men goes ter interferin' knock 'em over!"

At this half a dozen of the ruffianly crowd pushed forward to carry out their leader's order.

"Hold on!"

The command from Young Wild West rang out with startling distinctness.

He had pulled a Colt's six-shooter from his belt so quickly that the men saw it leveled at them almost before they knew he had it.

"The first man who touches a thing in this camp will die!" went on the daring young deadshot. "Now, then, you fellows get out of here!"

"An' move mighty quick!" added Cheyenne Charlie, presenting a revolver at them.

"And don't make a move to pull a shooter while you are doing it, either!" said Jim Dart, with a smile.

Con Carney thought he had better have something to say, too, so he turned his rifle on the gang and exclaimed:

"Ye have struck ther wrong camp, begob!"

There were easily twenty of the men, and the chances are that they had thought they would have an easy time of it.

It was more than likely that they intended to go through the camp and take what they wanted, while the trembling occupants waited for them to get through and take their departure.

But they had made a mistake!

There was no trembling occupant of that camp.

On the other hand, they were all full of fight, for the three girls now had rifles leveled at the crowd and Hop Wah was flourishing a long-barreled six-shooter in a way that showed he meant business.

Thundering Ike reeled back a few steps and fell over a follower.

"I guess you fellows don't quite understand the situation," remarked Wild, stepping up to him. "Just to show you that we mean business, I'll knock you down a couple of times!"

Spat!

The active boy's right fist shot out and caught the rascally man between the eyes almost before he ceased speaking.

Thundering Ike reeled back a few steps and fell over a little bush.

"Ther first galoot what interferes is goin' to die!" cried Cheyenne Charlie, warningly.

He was heeded, for not one of them any more than moved uneasily.

Thundering Ike got up in a dazed way and tried to jerk a shooter from his belt.

Biff!

Young Wild West hit him a blow on the short rib this time, and down he went again.

This time he remained perfectly quiet.

The blow had taken all the fight out of him, as well as his wind.

"Now, then," observed our hero, flashing a glance at the crowd, "I guess I had better thrash the whole lot of you. Just stand where you are and try to keep me from hitting you; I am going to land you!"

He hit the nearest fellow and sent him spinning like a top.

Then the rest decided to withdraw, and they did so in a hurry.

Those who had got out of the wagon made a rush for it and scrambled in as though their very lives depended upon it.

Young Wild West gave the last man he had hit a kick that sent him faster away from the camp than he could have gone otherwise, exclaiming as he did so:

"You are a pack of cowardly hounds, just as I took you to be. Now, then, if you want to see Thundering Ike alive again, just light out! When you get a mile away from here I will let him go. You all hear what I say! Now move! I shan't hesitate to fill your leader with lead and tie him on his horse and send him after you if you don't happen to get your mules on a run in pretty short order!"

He now seized the leader of the gang by the collar and lifted him to his feet.

"You sneaking hound!" he exclaimed; "you heard what I just told your gang! I want you to understand that I mean every word of it, too!"

"Go on, boys!" cried Thundering Ike, in a frightened tone of voice. "I reckon we struck the wrong camp. Don't wait! Ther young feller will kill me! I kin tell it by ther flash in his eye. He's a real tornado, boys, an' you've jest seen enough ter know it."

Before the last words were out of the villain's mouth the mule wagon was in motion.

One of the men began plying the lash upon the long-eared animals, while another handled the reins.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Cheyenne Charlie, the scout: "I

reckon that's what you call a mighty quick leave! There they go, Wild! Jest look at 'em!"

Only the back end of the covered wagon could be seen through a narrow space in the woods some fifty yards away from the camp.

The mounted villains had taken the lead and the thud of their horses' hoofs could be heard.

Jim Dart had taken the precaution to catch the bridle of the leader's horse, and he stood holding the steed waiting for Wild to start him off.

"Faith! I think that bates anything I iver seen!" exclaimed Con Carney. "I thought we was after bein' robbed when that crowd of fierce-looking men came up. Did I iver see ther loikes of it? No, niver!"

"Queer things happen here in the West," answered our hero, smiling at the Irishman. "There are lots of bad men to be run across, but the majority of them lose their nerve when it comes to the test."

"I reckon you're goin' ter let me go now, ain't yer?" asked Thundering Ike, looking very crestfallen and not a little frightened.

"Your friends are not a mile away yet," answered Wild. "Just take it easy. What did you intend to do when you halted here, anyway?"

"I reckon you seen what we intended ter do," was the retort. "We was jest goin' ter take charge an' git what we needed from what you had."

"Oh, is that all?"

"Yes, that's all."

"Well, you got pretty badly fooled, didn't you?"

"I should reckon so. Say, young feller, who are you, anyway?"

"Me? Oh, my name is Young Wild West."

"Great snakes!"

"No, that isn't it; Young Wild West, I told you."

"Well, I reckon I've heard of you. You belong in Weston, up in ther Black Hills, don't yer?"

"Yes, I don't mind telling that you've got that right."

"Well, I seen yer once in Deadwood. If I had known it was you I wouldn't have bothered with yer."

"You didn't recognize me when you halted here, then?"

"Nope! I never thought ther least thing about yer. You had gone out of my mind altogether. But now I know."

"I guess ye do, begob!" spoke up the Irishman.

"Well," said Wild, in his cool and easy way, "you take my advice and don't bother strangers hereafter. You can get through this world a great deal better by actin' right. By your looks you are a villain, but there may be a chance for you yet."

The man said nothing to this.

But the look on his evil face told plainly that the words had no effect on him.

"Just get on your horse now; I am going to let you go. When you get over there by that tall cottonwood I am going to put a bullet through the crown of your hat, so be sure and have the hat high on the top of your head."

Thundering Ike pushed up the dent in the top of his greasy felt hat without being told anything further.

He knew what was coming.

He got upon his horse, and at a word from our hero started away on a gallop.

CHAPTER III.

THE CIRCLE OF CHINAMEN.

Young Wild West waited until Thundering Ike got to the cottonwood tree he had spoken of and then he raised his rifle to his shoulder.

The villain was riding swiftly, and in another second he would be out of sight around a clump of trees.

Crack!

The boy's rifle spoke and Thundering Ike was seen to clap his hand to his head.

Then he was gone.

"I put the bullet through the crown of his hat, all right," Wild observed, as he turned to his companions. "It probably touched his hair and made him realize it. That was a very bad gang, and if they had got the upper hand they would have cleaned us out."

"I reckon they would," said the scout, twisting his heavy mustache thoughtfully. "But you ain't ther one to let sich a

gang git ther upper hand. You always nip 'em in ther bad, an' that's about ther only way to treat 'em."

The Irishman was standing close to the dashing young deadshot looking at him in silent admiration.

"What's the matter, Con?" queried our hero, calling him by his first name.

"Ye can shoot awful straight, Mr. West," was the reply.

"Yes, I can shoot pretty straight. Why, didn't you think, I would put a bullet through that man's hat, as I said I would do?"

"No, sor, to tell ye ther truth, I did not, begob! I thought ye would either miss him altogether or be after killin' him entoirely. It was a wonderful shot!"

"That wasn't so wonderful, Con. If you stay with us very long you are apt to see us all make better shots than that. Why, Hop can shoot as straight as that, can't you, Hop?"

"Me shootee allee samee dlunken cowboy," was the reply.

The fact was that the Chinaman was a rather poor shot.

But now and then he did some good work in that line.

When he shot the snake that was coiled in the path while the Irishman was getting a stick ready to kill it he did it more from good luck than anything else.

Either Wild, Charlie, Jim Dart or Arietta could shoot the head from a snake at that distance nine times out of ten.

It was now getting dark, so more wood was placed upon the fire to light up the scene.

As there was no hostile Indians in that part of the country just then, and they believed that there were no white villains about, save the ones they had just run out of camp, they did not think it worth while trying to hide themselves.

Then again they had a guest, and they wanted to make it as pleasant for him as possible.

As they sat around the campfire the Irishman got in a talkative mood and told them all about himself.

It was interesting to them to listen to the description he gave of his native land and the manners and customs of the people there.

For over an hour he talked away, and then one of the listeners grew tired of it.

It was Hop Wah.

He produced a pack of cards from one of the mysterious pockets he had and began shuffling them over so all hands could see him.

Instantly Con Carney became interested.

He ceased talking about Ireland, and when he had re-filled his pipe he looked at Hop and said:

"What have ye there, Mister Hop?"

"Cards what Melican mans play um gamee callee poker with," was the reply.

"Sure, I learned that game in ther city of New York. It is a foine game. I played all night with me two cousins one toime, and I won sixty-foive cints. Poker is one of ther easiest games I ever seen played. All ye have to know is that four of a kind beats a full hand and that a full hand beats a flush, which is all of ther foive cards of ther same spots, and that a flush beats three of a kind, while three of a kind beats two, which is what they call a pair."

"Whatee pair beat?" asked the celestial innocently.

"A pair?" said the Irishman, thoughtfully. "Why, a pair will beat anything that is not as good as a pair."

"Pair beatee one, then."

"Yes! You have it, begob!"

"Me not know poker gamee," observed Hop, shaking his head. "Me see Melican mans play, but me no know."

"That will do, Hop!" spoke up our hero. "You are not going to get in any gambling game with Carney. The chances are that he hasn't any money to speak of, anyhow."

"Begob, but that's roight!" exclaimed Con. "It took about ther last cent I had to buy me outfit over in Lovelocks."

"You can show him some tricks with the cards if you want to, Hop," said Wild.

"Allee ligh; me show tlick," answered the Celestial, cleverly concealing his disappointment at finding out that the Irishman had no money.

Hop nodded pleasantly and picked up the cards and went through several of his tricks for Con.

"Be Saint Patrick!" he gasped, "I wouldn't bet with ther Chinees, not if I was after havin' a million dollars," he declared. "He is too smart for me, an' I'm willin' to admit it, begob!"

Hop put his cards away and sought his sleeping quarters.

It was early, but he had to go on watch at half-past three with Wild, and he liked plenty of sleep.

Our friends always kept a strict watch during the night when they were camping out.

They had found it advisable to do so.

Charlie was to do duty till twelve and Jim until half-past three, after the scout retired.

Then Wild took his trick, and Hop always insisted to be up with him.

When Con Carney heard of the programme he asked to take a trick, so Jim agreed to allow him to keep him company while he was on guard.

The plan was carried out that night without interruption.

Thundering Ike and his gang did not come back and no one else came along to disturb them.

When the sun arose the next morning the fire was already blazing, and after he had introduced his face and hands to the water of the little lake, Hop put the coffee on and then lay down to get a few more winks of sleep.

The girls attended to the making of the breakfast, and when it was ready all hands were on hand to eat it.

"It's goin' to be a fine day, anyhow," observed Cheyenne Charlie, as they saddled their horses to make a start. "It'll be putty hot, but we kin stand it, I reckon. By to-morrer afternoon we ought to reach ther place we're headin' for."

"I am pretty sure we will," answered Wild. "I suppose the gang that tried to clean us out last night are heading for Boiling Butte, too, for they went off in that direction. The chances are that we will meet them again."

"Well, they'd better look out how they behave themselves if we do," said Dart.

Owing to the fact that they had pack-horses with them, they could not travel at a very high rate of speed, but they covered the ground pretty fast, for all that.

It was a steady ride, and the Irishman, not being used to the saddle yet, complained when night came.

"I'll be mighty glad when we git to ther gold mines," begob!" he remarked. "I was not made to ride a horse."

"You will get used to it in a week or two," answered Wild.

"No, I will not, sor. As soon as I git to the mines I'll stop ridin' horseback, begob!"

They had met no one during the day, and had simply followed the trail made by Thundering Ike's crowd.

Wild knew that they must be pretty close to them, but this did not worry him any.

They camped as usual and burned a bright fire until it was time to turn in.

Nothing happened again that night.

When they set out the next morning about an hour after sunrise they were all of the opinion that they would strike Boiling Butte before the day had passed.

They pushed along, and about ten o'clock sighted the mule wagon and horsemen ahead of them.

The villains were at a halt where there was a fork in the trail.

Our friends halted before they were seen by the men and waited for them to take their choice.

Finally Thundering Ike chose the left fork, and when they had disappeared Young Wild West rode up and took the right.

They had not gone more than a mile when they suddenly came upon a dozen Chinamen, who were well armed and standing in a circle about a rock, on which sat one of their race wearing a yellow mantle and holding a little parasol over his head.

It was a rather peculiar sight, to say the least.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ARRIVAL AT BOILING BUTTE.

The horses of our friends had been on a walk for the past few minutes, and the ground being soft just there, it is doubtful if the circle of Chinamen had heard their approach.

But as they rounded a bend of rock and came in view, less than two hundred feet from them, the celestials broke the circle instantly and gathered in a bunch.

The gaudy-looking Mongolian slid down from his perch on top of the rock in anything but a graceful fashion.

"What in thunder do you call that?" cried Cheyenne Charlie. "What is it, Hop, a Chinese meetin'?"

"Hard to tell, I guess," spoke up Jim Dart.

Hop looked at the gathering of his countrymen, and as he did so an expression of uneasiness came over his face.

"Allee samee Highbinders," he said. "Velly bad Chinamen. Stabbee—killee! Highbinders velly bad!"

"Highbinders, eh?" observed Young Wild West. "Well, I have heard lots about them, but I thought they confined themselves to Frisco. I didn't think they came out here in the wilds of Nevada. What can they want here, Hop?"

"Melican mans just dlovee out of Flisco; Highbinders killee Melican mans; then have to gittee out sometimes. They no likee Chineese man who no belong; they tly to killee me now!"

The words were hardly out of Hop's mouth when four of the Chinamen strode forward to meet the party, which had halted.

They were chattering away in their own peculiar language and looking hard at Young Wild West's Mongolian servant.

"Here! What do you fellows want?" Wild demanded, as they attempted to push past the sorrel stallion he rode and get to Hop.

They paid not the least attention to him, but made a rush to seize Hop Wah.

"Stop that!" cried the dashing young deadshot, seizing one of them by the queue and giving him a jerk that threw him to the ground.

Charlie and Jim did the same thing to two of the others and the fourth one received a crack on the head from the barrel of the Irishman's rifle that sent him staggering.

Then a fight started in earnest.

The rest of the Chinamen, save the one wearing the mantle, came rushing at our friends.

From the flowing sleeves of their loose gowns they drew ugly-looking knives, and it was more than evident that they meant to do some slashing.

Out came the revolvers of Wild and his partners.

"Get back, you yellow hounds!" cried the young deadshot in ringing tones. "If you don't some of you will go under in short order!"

But they came right on.

One ugly-looking fellow made a slash at the scout with his big knife and narrowly missed burying it in his thigh.

Crack!

Charlie's revolver spoke and the Highbinder went down in a heap.

Hop had drawn his six-shooter by this time and he began firing into the ranks of the persistent Chinamen.

He could not help hitting them and two dropped badly wounded in almost no time.

"Back!" thundered Wild, charging them with his horse. "There won't be one of you left to tell the tale if you don't get out of the way, you yellow scoundrels!"

They fell back, but not because they were told to.

Three of their number had dropped to the ground, and that was quite likely the reason.

Snarling and chattering like so many monkeys, they retreated behind the rocks, of which there were plenty there for the purpose.

Wah was a much frightened celestial.

"Me meetee Highbinders in Flisco," he said; "they no likee Hop Wah. Highbinders killee and steal from goodee Chinamen, and when Melican police comee they killee with knife and hidee allee samee lats in cellar! Me no likee!"

"Well, they won't get you, Hop, so don't worry," answered our hero. "But, by jingo! they were pretty hot after you, and if Charlie hadn't shot that fellow just as he did he would have been carved up like a haunch of venison. Highbinders, eh? Well, we will give them more than they want, I guess."

They now rode on past the place where the yellow scoundrels were concealed.

Wild thought it strange that they did not open fire on them with pistols, since they had failed to accomplish their purpose by making the onslaught with their broad-bladed knives.

But they did not, and our friends were soon safely past them.

It was quite an exciting experience—something out of the ordinary, in fact, and our hero and his partners made up their minds that there were lively times ahead for them.

They did not mean to let a few Chinese rascals drive them away from Boiling Butte.

That would not be like them.

Exciting adventure was what they craved, and if the gang of Highbinders could furnish it for them, all right.

But they did not mean to allow the yellow fiends to get hold of Hop Wah.

He had fought for them on more than one occasion, and they were ready to fight for him.

They noticed that the celestial had never before shown so much fear.

He tried hard to get the pack-horses in the lead, as though he was fearful lest the Highbinders might suddenly rush up from behind and seize him.

Two miles from the spot where the sudden attack had been made upon them by the Highbinders they came in sight of a mining camp.

"That's Boilin' Butte, you kin bet!" exclaimed Cheyenne Charlie.

"What do they call it that name for?" Anna asked, looking at her husband curiously.

"'Cause there's so many geysers an' boilin' springs around it," was the reply. "We ain't seen any of 'em yet, but we will afore long, I reckon."

"I guess there's one of them now," said Jim, pointing off to the left. "Can't you see the water shooting in the air?"

They all saw it when he pointed it out.

As they rode toward the camp they saw two or three more of the geysers off to the left.

The country was very hilly just there and there was no end of small rocks and boulders scattered about.

They now came upon a well-beaten trail and followed it to the heart of the camp.

They came in front of the building that had a sign on it indicating that it was a hotel, and that both man and beast could be accommodated.

They were in the act of dismounting when they looked back on the trail and saw Thundering Ike and his gang coming.

"By taking the right fork we passed them and got here first, though no doubt the way they came is the shortest," observed our hero.

"Well, between that gang of galoots an' ther Highbinders I reckon we've got to be on ther lookout," Charlie said, smiling grimly.

There were very few men to be seen in the heart of the town.

They were at work on their claims, no doubt.

Three or four rough-looking fellows, of the sort who never do much work when they can possibly get along without it, came out as the halt was made in front of the alleged hotel.

Young Wild West always made it a point to put up at a public place when they found one that was able to accommodate them.

It was a pleasant diversion from their camping life to have others prepare their meals for them and for them to sleep in beds.

Not that they preferred that kind of life to roughing it, but just because it was a change.

"Where's the boss?" our hero asked, as he dismounted.

"He'll be right out," said one of the miners on the narrow stoop that ran along the front of the shanty structure. "He's helpin' his hired man clean up ther back room where a couple of galoots was fightin' with bowies this mornin'. They made an awful mess of it, an' ther undertaker had ter come an' git one of 'em. Ther other one is over in that shanty ther other side of ther road gittin' ready ter pars in his chips. He's got a dominie an' a doctor there, but it ain't no use, I reckon. This is only a sample of what happens in Boilin' Butte, so if you think you won't like ther place you'd better go right on."

"It seems that you are good on giving information and advice," remarked our hero, walking up to the fellow, who was a very rough-appearing man with tangled beard and hair. "I simply asked you where the boss was."

"Well, I told yer, didn't I? What's ther matter with yer, anyhow? Don't think that because you've got some petticoats with yer yer kin call me! I won't have it, youngster! I'm a man old enough ter be your father. If you don't like Boilin' Butte jest light out, that's all."

"Oh, I like the place all right. But if all the people in it are like you I won't take much of a notion to them."

"You won't, hey?"

The man very quickly pulled a big six shooter and pointed it at our hero's head.

"What's that for?" Wild asked coolly.

"It's fur ter blow a hole through your head if yer don't look out!" was the reply.

"Oh!"

Whack!

As quick as a flash the young deadshot struck the man's wrist a blow and the revolver went spinning away from him, landing on the ground something like a dozen feet away.

Then before the rascally fellow could recover from his surprise at the action, Wild caught him by the collar and flung him off the stoop.

"You are too insulting to be standing on the stoop of a hotel, you dirty-looking galoot!" he said. "Just light out now or I'll hurt you!"

"Whew!" cried the other loungers in unison. "What's up now?"

Just then a bare-headed man came out of the door.

"What are yer doin', Buck?" he roared. "Been insultin' folks what's thinkin' of bein' my guests? Why—gosh all creation!"

The last exclamation was caused when Wild hit the man a blow between the eyes and knocked him flat on his back.

He had come at our hero after he had recovered from his surprise, and down he went for his pains.

"How about accommodations for our party for a day or two, landlord?" asked Wild, looking at the amazed hotel-keeper smilingly.

"Well, I reckon you kin have ther best that's ter be had," was the reply. "Jest take your horses around back; you'll find a place ter put 'em. I'll git ther old lady ter fix up fur yer right away. You've got ladies with yer, an' ladies is always welcome at ther Boilin' Butte Hotel."

"Come on!" said Wild, not noticing the man the landlord had called Buck, who was in the act of picking himself up.

They started around the corner of the building just as Thundering Ike and his party came up and halted.

The villains paid no attention to our friends—acted as though they had never seen them before, in fact—but rushed into the bar to get the drinks they were longing for.

Young Wild West and his companions found a long shed in the rear of the hotel.

There was a man waiting there, who told them that it was the stable, and that their steeds would be well taken care of.

As there was plenty of fodder to be seen, Wild concluded that what he said was right, so the horses were duly placed under the shed and tied with halters.

This had scarcely been done when a very stout woman came from a back door of the shanty and called to them that she would be glad to furnish them with a good dinner just as soon as she could get it ready.

"You gals come right into ther sittin'-room," she added. "Ther men folks will have ter hang around ther bar or ther back room 'cause we don't allow no men in ther sittin'-room."

"Go on, girls," said Wild. "I guess we can make out all right."

They entered the back room off the bar by a rear door and found several of Thundering Ike's gang there getting ready to play cards.

But they paid no attention to them and walked on through into the barroom.

CHAPTER V.

HOP SHOWS THE STABLEMAN SOMETHING AND IS THEN KIDNAPED.

When they went into the hotel our friends left Hop Wah out at the shed to look after the horses.

Young Wild West thought too much of his splendid sorrel stallion, Spitsire, to trust him to a stranger, and as all their horses were the very best that money could buy, it stood them in hand to be careful about them.

Hop had fully recovered from his fright caused by the attack of the Highbinders, and when he saw that the hostler was a quiet, unassuming sort of a man, he decided to rope him into a gambling game, if possible.

Hop also wanted some whisky the worst way. "Velly fine day," he said, as he started in to rub down the sorrel stallion.

"You're right," answered the man, looking a bit surprised, because he was not used to meeting with such a pleasant-spoken Chinaman.

"You velly nice Melican man; know allee boutee horses." "Well, I reckon I do know somewhat about 'em," and the stable fellow paused in his work and puffed himself out a little. "I was brought up among horses, yer know."

"Me likee nicee Melican man dat knowee allee 'bout horses. Me likee tleat to tanglefoot."

"Well, if you'd like ter do that jest say ther word, an' you'll find that I'm your huckleberry."

"You go gittee; me pay fur um tanglefoot."

"I'll do that quick enough. Give us your money."

Hop produced the money and gave it to him, smiling as sweetly as a child as he did it.

The stableman stopped work right away and started for the bar of the hotel.

Hop went on with his work, humming a Chinese ditty meanwhile.

In a very few minutes the stableman came back with a bottle of whisky.

Then they both took a drink and formally introduced themselves.

Jacob was the man's name, so he said, and he took a great fancy to the pleasant and liberal Chinaman.

"There's plenty of Chinese galoots around these diggin's," he said, "but you're ther first one I ever met what's any good. You ain't like ther rest of 'em. They're mighty bad, I reckon."

"Dat so?" queried Hop, thinking of the Highbinders. "Whattée bad Chinaman do?"

"Well, there's a gang close by here what only showed up a couple of days ago, an' I've heard say that they've killed an' robbed as many as seven of their own people what worked around here fur ther miners."

Hop's face clouded a little.

In San Francisco the bad element in the Chinese quarter had formed a secret society which to the outside world was known as the Highbinders.

The purpose of the society was to prey upon the Chinese who were honest and who refused to join it when asked by its secret agents.

The Highbinders did not confine their evil-doings to their own race alone, but many whites suffered at their hands, and many were the mysterious murders that had been committed which were laid to them by the police of the Golden Gate City.

Hop was quite certain that some one in the gang of Chinamen had recognized him as one who had refused to join the society in Frisco.

When the stableman began telling about the bad gang of Chinamen his fears came back.

He took another pull at the bottle of whisky.

"Dat allee light," he said, putting on a cheerful air. "Me catchee bad Chinamen me shootee, allee samee Young Wild West."

"Who's Young Wild West?" asked the man.

"He my boss; he gleat boy; beatee anybody in um world shootee. He no 'flaid of fifty bad men."

"An' if you catch ther bad gang of Chinese you'll shoot 'em jest ther same as he could do it—is that what you mean?"

"Yes; me allee samee putty good shot."

The stableman took a nip from the bottle.

Then the two worked away at the horses in silence for a minute or two.

Hop allowed the Highbinders to slip from his mind again.

"Jacob wantee see um tlick?" he asked.

"See what?" answered the man.

"Me show Jacob somet'ing he gittee surprise."

"What kin yer show me, Hop Wah?"

Hop produced a yellow silk handkerchief from his pocket.

"You see this?" he said.

"I reckon I do," was the retort.

"You see this dollee?"

A quick downward throw of his right arm and the dollar appeared clutched between his forefinger and thumb.

It was rather mystifying to the stableman as to how the dollar got there without being taken from the Chinaman's pocket, but he did not stop to think that it might be attached to an elastic cord which was fastened somewhere in the wide sleeve, and he admitted that he saw it.

"Now me show Jacob somet'ing," and with that the celestial smiled serenely and placed the handkerchief over the dollar and grasped it from the outside.

"Where um dolle?" he asked.

"Right there under ther yaller handkerchief. You've got hold of it."

Hop shook his head.

"Me gottee hold no dollee," he declared; "you make mistakes; you thinkee see dollee."

"Oh, you can't make no fool of me. I'll bet you two dol-

lars that the dollar you showed me is under ther handkerchief."

"Me takee bet," and the Chinaman smiled and nodded pleasantly.

"All right. It is a go, then."

"Takee off hankelchief."

Jacob hastened to do so.

There was no dollar to be seen.

"Where in thunder did it go?" he exclaimed, looking puzzled.

Hop shook his head.

"Velly funny," he said.

Then he reached over and took the two dollars from the man's hand.

It was parted with rather reluctantly, but that made no difference to Hop.

The dollar he had played the trick with was up his sleeve, out of the stableman's sight, and there was no danger of his finding it without tearing his clothing off.

And this was something that he would not be allowed to do, even if he tried it.

"Well, that is mighty funny!" and Jacob started in to rub one of the horses.

"Velly funny," admitted the celestial.

"How did yer do it?"

Hop laughed.

"Me no likee tell," he answered.

The stableman thought a while, and then looking at the Chinaman, said:

"Now I'll show you a trick."

"Allee light."

The stableman then produced a greasy-looking pack of cards.

"You see that king of spades?" he said, holding the faces of three cards toward Hop.

"Yes, me see."

"Well, I'm goin' ter throw ther whole three cards on ther ground, face down, an' then I'll bet yer two dollars yer can't pick out ther king of spades ther first time."

The Chinaman half closed his eyes and appeared in deep thought for a moment.

Then he brightened up and said:

"Let me lookee at cards; me makee sure about um king of spades."

Jacob turned them over and looked at them himself.

Then he handed them to Hop to investigate.

That was where he made a mistake.

That was one of the oldest kind of games, and Hop knew how to perform it as well as the man who had invented it.

But three-card monte will fool many yet, if they are inclined to bet money when affable strangers offer to show them a trick with cards.

Apparently all that Hop did was to look the three cards over carefully before returning them.

But he did something else.

He substituted the king of diamonds for the king of spades.

Though the stableman cast a glance at them as he placed them in his hands to his liking, he never discovered the difference.

"Are yer ready?" he asked.

"Yes, me leady."

"An' you'll bet two dollars that you kin pick out ther card ther first time?"

"If me see where um card go me bettee."

"All right."

Jacob thought he had the Chinaman, when he should have known better after losing two dollars on the trick that had been shown him.

He held the faces of the cards so Hop could see them and then made several passes back and forth with them and dropped them on the ground before him.

"There!" he exclaimed; "kin yer pick out ther king of spades?"

Hop shook his head.

"No king of spades there," he answered, looking puzzled.

"Oh, yes, there is."

"No!"

The celestial was positive.

"I'll bet you four dollars, which is all I've got, that there's a king of spades there!" Jacob cried, going down in his pocket.

"Me takee bet."

Both laid the money on the ground.

Jacob knew just where the card he thought was the king of spades was.

He burst into a laugh to think how easy he was getting the best of the Chinaman.

"You might be good at doin' tricks with a silver dollar an' a yaller handkerchief, but you don't know nothin' about cards. Now I'll pick up ther king of spades fur yer."

He reached out and turned the card over with an air of triumph.

But his manner changed instantly and a look of blank dismay came over his face.

"What in thunder is ther matter?" he gasped.

Then he turned the other two cards over.

"Why, ther blame thing is ther king of diamonds!" he exclaimed.

"You say him um king of spades," said Hop smilingly, and then he scooped up the money lying on the ground.

Jacob got up rather angrily.

"You're a fraud!" he said, turning to his work in disgust.

"Me no undelstan'," Hop answered innocently.

"I've a notion ter crack yer on ther head! You changed ther cards when you was lookin' at 'em."

"Me no undelstan'," repeated the celestial, looking more innocent than ever.

"I'll——"

The words were cut short on the lips of the stableman, for at that instant three Chinamen sprang around the corner of the shed and fell upon the object of his wrath.

A startled cry came from the lips of Hop Wah as he was seized, and then he was choked into silence and dragged around the corner of the shed.

Hop had been kidnaped by the Highbinders!

CHAPTER VI.

WILD SETTLES THUNDERING IKE FOR THE SECOND TIME.

One of the first men Young Wild West and his partners noticed standing at the bar of the hotel was Thundering Ike.

He was just swallowing a drink of the stuff he called tanglefoot and a scowl came over his face as he saw our friends.

It was the second or third drink he had taken since his arrival and the fiery beverage had put a false courage in him.

As he sat the glass upon the counter he turned to our hero and exclaimed:

"So we meet again, eh, Young Wild West?"

"Well, it seems so," was the calm retort.

"You sorter made a monkey out of me ther other night, didn't yer?" went on the villain, who was plainly looking for trouble.

"You had me foul an' you took advantage of it, didn't yer?"

"Don't you think you had a show?"

"No!" thundered the man. "But I've got a show now!"

He grabbed for his revolver and succeeded in getting it from the holster.

"Let go that shooter, or you'll be a dead man in less than a second!"

Wild had divined his intention, and the words were not out of his mouth when he had him covered.

There was a hush in the room instantly.

Very few had noticed the impending row, but now every eye was turned upon the two as they stood facing each other.

A calm smile played about the lips of Young Wild West, while an expression that was half anger, half fear, hung over the countenance of the villain who called himself Thundering Ike.

The hand of the latter still clutched the revolver, which was now at his belt, and he stood as still as a statue.

"Drop that shooter! It is your last chance!"

Thud!

The weapon fell to the floor.

"How about your show now?" asked the boy, smiling in a tantalizing way. "Why don't you go ahead and get square with me for making a monkey out of you the other day?"

"I reckon you're too soon with a shooter fur me," admitted the scoundrel. "You've got the drop on me; I cave."

"Well, since you seem to be bound to have it out with me, suppose we go outside and fight it out? I will fight any way you propose. Maybe you're good at handling a bowie. I know you don't know how to fight with your fists."

The challenge was given out in such a cool tone of voice that a murmur of admiration went up from those in the room who were not connected with Thundering Ike.

The athletic figure of Young Wild West was drawn to its full height, and the position he stood in told plainly that he was ready for anything that might come.

Thundering Ike remained silent.

"Come! You have either got to fight me or get out of this camp!"

Wild was just the least bit angered at the fellow now.

He knew he was a treacherous scoundrel, and since he had picked a row and tried to shoot him, Wild felt that he must make some kind of an example of him.

"S'pose I'm willin' ter drop it?" came from the lips of the villain in a voice that quavered a little.

"You can't drop it! You have got to fight or get out!"

"That ain't fair. You've got ther drop on me, an' you kin say anything, I s'pose."

"This is the second time I have had the drop on you. The last time I gave you a thrashing, and this time I feel like shooting you. I'll just tell the crowd here what kind of a man you are and what your gang is. Boys, if any one goes to fooling with his shooter you know what to do to him."

The last was meant for Cheyenne Charlie and Jim Dart.

"All right," they answered.

"An' I'm after bein' right here, too, begob!" chimed in Con Carney.

Then Wild told how the band of villains had rode up to their camp two days before and demanded the right to take what they pleased.

He related how the leader had been treated by him and how the whole band had been cowed and put to flight.

Some laughed at the leader of the villainous crowd and others hissed him.

"And now he comes here and tries to pick a row with me, so he can drop me and get square," concluded our hero. "But I want everybody to know that it will take more than Thundering Ike to drop me when I am looking!"

By this time every man belonging to Thundering Ike's band had crowded into the room.

Some of them were willing to fight for their leader, but the majority were not.

Thundering Ike himself wanted to do anything but fight just then.

The whisky he had imbibed made him think he could get the best of Young Wild West, and that is why he tried it.

But he had failed, and now he was as meek as a lamb.

"I reckon I'll go out," he observed, starting for the door.

"I'll help you!" Wild exclaimed, and with the quickness of a cat he caught the man by the back of his belt with his right hand and his thigh with his left.

Then it was that Young Wild West showed his muscle and strength.

Up went Thundering Ike over his head as though he was nothing more than a hundred-pound sack of grain.

He kicked and waved his arms frantically, no doubt fearing that he would fall and strike on his back.

Wild stood still for perhaps half a second and then he rushed through the doorway with the man.

He stopped short upon the stoop and let him go feet first into the sandy road.

It was surely a remarkable feat.

But there are plenty who could do the same thing, providing they possessed the quickness and tact.

Strength is not alone required, for there are plenty of boys who can put a bag of corn, which is supposed to weigh one hundred and twelve pounds, on his shoulder.

And if he can put it on his shoulder, he can throw it up and balance it on his hand for the space of a second, after he has made two or three attempts.

An athlete of twenty can do more, and as Young Wild West was certainly one of the greatest athletes of his time, the picking up of a man of one hundred and seventy pounds was not much for him to do, notwithstanding it seemed great in the eyes of those who saw him do it.

Thundering Ike struck on his feet, but he came down so hard that he could not retain his balance and he pitched forward and landed on his hands and knees.

Wild ran after him and was standing right before him when he got up.

"Mercy!" cried the villain, now thoroughly frightened. "I'm all right! I ain't goin' ter do nothin' wrong."

"Get out of here!" answered Wild. "Don't you show

your face in the hotel again as long as we are here. Scoot, now!"

Thundering Ike turned and ran away without stopping to get his horse.

Derisive yells rang in his ears as he ran.

Wild turned and went back in the barroom.

Not one of Thundering Ike's men had offered to raise a hand against him.

Two of them bought bottles of whisky and went out, the rest remaining there to have what they had come there for—a good time.

The two men who went out mounted, and, taking their leader's horse with them, started off in the direction he had taken.

They were going to select a suitable camping-ground and then wait there till the rest came.

What Wild had done to the villain naturally made him a hero in the eyes of the honest men of the mining camp.

Many insisted on shaking hands with him, while some wanted to put him on their shoulders and carry him around.

"It is all right, boys," the boy said to them. "I never look for trouble; it is always some one else who starts it. Then I generally give out what is coming to them."

"Well, I reckon you give that galoot putty nigh all what was comin' ter him," observed the hotel man. "You're a powerful young feller, you are!"

Wild always had enough money with him to carry him through, so he thought it would be in order to treat the crowd.

"Give the men what they want, landlord," he said. "I don't drink whisky myself, but it is no business of mine what others drink. I know everybody would be better off if they let it alone, but that isn't the custom around mining camps. Whoop her up, boys! Don't any of you get drunk and go to shooting around recklessly; if you do I'll take a hand in the game and shoot the buttons off your shirt collars."

A cheer went up from the miners and others in the place and a rush was made for the bar.

They all got served after a while and then Wild paid the bill.

It was at this juncture that a man came running in from the rear entrance in an excited manner.

It was the stableman who had lost his money through the sleight-of-hand of Hop Wah.

"Hey!" he cried, grabbing Jim Dart, who happened to be the nearest of our friends, by the arm; "your Chinaman was grabbed an' carried off by a lot of other Chinese galoots!"

"What!" cried Wild, it striking him right away that it was the work of the Highbinders. "Tell me what happened right away."

He caught the man by the collar and swung him around as he spoke.

"Your Chineese was putty near the end of ther shed, an' I was workin' on one of ther horses, when all of a sudden a lot of other Chinese galoots jumped in an' grabbed your Chineese," was the way the excited man put it.

There was not the least doubt in our hero's mind that he was telling the truth, and as that was about all that could be got from him in the way of information, he rushed out of the building and made for the horse-shed, followed by Charlie, Jim and the Irishman.

Rocks, clumps of bushes and groups of dwarfed trees were much in evidence all around that portion of the land in the rear of the shed.

Hiding-places were as thick as bees.

Wild made a quick scrutiny of the ground.

There were no hoofprints to be seen other than those before and under the shed.

But the footprints of human beings could be seen in plenty.

The dinner-bell rang just then, but Young Wild West and his partners had no time to eat now.

Wild ran to where his saddle was hanging and got his lariat.

He knew it might be needed.

"Carney," said he to the Irishman, "you go and eat dinner with the girls. I will leave you to protect them in case anything happen. You understand?"

"Yes, sor," was the reply.

"All right then. Tell them we will be back just as soon as we possibly can."

"Yes, sor."

As the Irishman started to do as he was told Young Wild West, Cheyenne Charlie and Jim Dart went around the shed and hurried along the trail of the Highbinders.

They could easily tell that there must have been at least half a dozen of them.

The peculiar flat-soled shoes the Chinamen wore made a different mark from the boots worn by white men.

They could be picked out as readily as the moccasined footprints of a redskin.

For a little more than a hundred yards the trail was a plain one.

Then the three came to a spot where the ground was hard and flinty.

The footprints could no longer be seen.

But Young Wild West was not going to allow a thing like that to baffle him.

He knew that the rascally Chinamen could not be very far away.

That was sufficient.

He would find them before very long.

But there was bound to be a delay now, and that would give Hop's captors a chance to get a good lead.

But they were on foot, and they could not keep traveling all day without a rest.

"Charlie, you go to the left; Jim, you keep right ahead, and I will work off to the right," said our hero. "One of us ought to pick up the trail in a few minutes."

Away they started.

Several of the miners of the camp had rushed out to find out what the matter was, but when they learned that a Chinaman had been carried off by some others of his own race they lost interest and went back to the shanty hotel.

CHAPTER VII.

HOP IS SAVED FOR A TIME.

Hop Wah stood not the least show in the clutches of the fiends that had caught him.

A silken cord was wound around him, pinioning his arms, and a handkerchief was stuffed into his mouth and a turn made about it.

As he was being borne rapidly away under cover of the bushes he saw that there were three more of them.

This made six, all told.

He knew they were the Highbinders and he gave himself up as lost.

That death was to be his fate he was certain.

The Highbinders thus far had not said a word to him.

They hurried as though their very lives depended on it, and, after dodging about here and there among the rocks and bushes for the space of ten minutes, came upon a beaten trail that led to a cluster of hills about a mile distant.

They were brawny, muscular fellows, all of them, and they carried their captive with comparative ease.

With a tireless trot they proceeded on their way, and when the foot of the hills was reached they turned sharply to the left up a dry watercourse.

The watercourse was anything but a straight one, and in many places the branches of trees completely covered it, forcing the Highbinders to stoop in order to get through.

In just about twenty minutes from the time they had started from the shed in the rear of the hotel with their prisoner they came to a halt before the wide mouth of a deep cavern.

Then a tall, repulsive-looking Chinaman appeared and gave a nod.

His face lit up when he saw that the six had brought a prisoner with them.

"So you got him, eh?" he said, speaking in Chinese.

"Yes," replied one of them.

"Good! We have decided to make this our permanent headquarters. It is much better than the place out on the trail where we had the fight with the Americans this morning. Bring the low dog, who is a disgrace to his people, before Ting Sung and let him learn his fate."

Hop heard all this, and also what followed, and he resolved to remember all he heard, so he would be able to translate it to Young Wild West, in case he escaped death at the hands of the Highbinders.

Into the cavern the repulsive Mongolian went, and after him came the six with their captive.

It was dark in the rear of the underground place, but they kept right ahead and were soon swallowed up in the inky gloom.

But the leader tore aside a curtain that was formed from a hanging blanket and then the glimmer of a fire could be seen through a short passage.

Hop took all this in and wondered how soon it would be over.

"If Misler Wild only come he makee Highbinders putty sickee!" he thought.

But when the curtain dropped behind him all hope left him and he nerved himself to die like a good and brave Chinaman should.

Less than a hundred steps brought them to a chamber that was probably twenty feet square, with an arched ceiling of cracked and irregular shape.

It was partly of earth and partly of rock, and through a narrow fissure some of the smoke escaped.

The rest filled the cavern and caused the Chinese Highbinders to cough and sneeze occasionally.

A boulder had been rolled before the fire, and as the prisoner was brought in the Chinaman with the yellow mantle and parasol got upon it and assumed an air of extreme solemnity.

This individual was Ting Sung, the leader of the band of Highbinders.

Driven out of Frisco by the police, he was now ruling his followers in the State of Nevada with an iron hand.

"What have we sworn, brothers?" he piped in his own language, as Hop Wah was placed on the stony, rough ground before him.

"Death to all traitors!" came the unanimous retort from all hands. Hop looked around and counted fourteen of them, but not one had a pitying look.

With his almond eyes almost bulging from his head, the captive celestial waited to hear what the means of his doom would consist of.

"Remove the gag," said Ting Sung. "I will talk with the traitor."

"Brothers of the Flowery Kingdom, you have made a mistake!" exclaimed Hop, speaking the language of his country and putting on as bold a front as he possibly could.

"The Highbinders never make a mistake!" thundered the leader. "Brothers, is the guard doing his duty?"

"Yes, noble Ting Sung," was the reply.

"Then I will decide the fate of the prisoner. What is your name, base dog of a traitor?"

"Hop Wah," was the firm reply.

"You refused to join the Highbinders in San Francisco two years ago, did you not?"

"Yes, I refused. I did not want to stay there, so I felt it was no use in my joining."

"But you told the police where we were to be found, and then you fled."

"I did not! I never told the police anything."

Hop was talking as firmly as a man who expected to lose his life in a few minutes could talk.

"You lie, Hop Wah!"

"I do not lie. I speak the truth."

"You shall die a horrible death," went on Ting Sung. "You shall be boiled alive in a boiling pool that is but a short distance from here. You shall never see your American friends again!"

"You can kill me if you like," said Hop Wah, looking the leader of the band squarely in the face, "but you will be sorry for it. Young Wild West will avenge my death. He will not stop until every one of you have suffered death. I am telling you what is true. Young Wild West never misses when he shoots, and when he starts to find a wicked man he never rests until he finds him. He is close by now, so if you would live you had better let me go free. If you do let me go free, I promise you that I will not tell one word of what has happened. I will not divulge the secret of the Highbinders."

Ting Sung laughed and the rest joined in.

It was a very dry laugh and sounded anything but pleasant to the ears of the captive.

"Enough!" cried the leader. "Away with him to the boiling pool, my brothers!"

The two villains standing on either side of Hop drew their knives and touched the points against his back and breast.

This made him perfectly willing to move.

He stepped off with them, and then the whole crowd filled out through the passage into the broad cavern.

But they did not leave it by the way they had brought the prisoner in.

There was a narrow passage off to the left through which came the light, and out of this they made their way.

Once through the passage, they came to a rugged descent, and down this Hop was forced to walk.

Below he could see a cloud of steam arising, while a strange bubbling noise came to his ears.

The boiling pool was less than fifty yards away, and he knew it.

The captive Chinaman's face was a sickly yellow now.

He was certainly more frightened than he had ever been in his life.

At the foot of the descent was an abandoned shaft, and near it lay a post with a cross-piece nailed and braced to the top.

As Ting Sung saw this he paused and gave a nod of satisfaction.

"Take this and plant it firmly close to the edge of the boiling pool," he said.

A rusty pick lay near the old shaft, showing that when it was abandoned those who owned it did not think it worth while to take it away with them.

One of the Highbinders seized the pick, and at the direction of the leader, began to dig.

The others began taking dirt from the hole with their hands as fast as it was loosened.

And the boiling, bubbling water in the pool made cruel music for Hop Wah to listen to meanwhile.

It did not take long to plant the post with the cross-piece running out horizontally on a line with the edge of the pool.

"The traitor must die a slow death!" exclaimed Ting Sung. "One of you throw a rope over the cross-piece."

The Highbinders seemed to have everything that was needed to perpetrate the fiendish task they had ahead of them, for one of them unwound a lariat from beneath his loose-fitting garment and obeyed the command of the leader.

It was so hot near the edge of the pool that those who had set the post there were panting and trying to cool themselves off at a safe distance.

After three or four attempts the man with the lariat succeeded in getting the end over the cross-piece and catching it.

Then he let it slide over, pulling both ends back to where Ting Sung stood.

The latter was the only one who wore a hat, probably to show that he was a peg above the rest.

At a command from him the lariat was tied about Hop's waist.

Then his ankles were tied together.

"Now," said Ting Sung, stepping back and smiling like the demon he was, "we will boil the traitor. Lift him up, some of you, and pull the rope taut!"

This was done.

Hop could stand it no longer, and he struggled so fiercely that he got away from those who were holding him and rolled over on the ground.

Down came the rope from the beam and a cry of anger left the lips of Ting Sung.

He struck the two who had let the captive drop with the flat of his knife and sent them reeling.

"Pick him up!" he cried. "Throw the rope over again. Hurry!"

The struggling prisoner was picked up again and one of the scoundrels picked up the lariat and carefully measured the distance.

It was accomplished at the first try.

As the Highbinders flung the rope over the beam Hop Wah let out a shrill scream for help.

His cry did not go unheeded, for the next instant Wild and his partners appeared and a lasso whizzed through the air.

Down came the noose directly over Hop and the man who was holding him up ready to let him swing out over the boiling pool!

A quick jerk brought them both to the ground.

Ting Sung saw that his fiendish crime was to be averted, and, with a cry of rage and defiance, he whipped out his knife and severed the lasso.

"Back to the cave with him!" he shouted. "We will save him for another time! Kill the white dogs!"

While the two of them dragged the helpless Hop up the little hill for the cavern the rest began firing at the three who had appeared so suddenly.

They did not attempt to fight with knives this time, but every one of them had a revolver.

Crack, crack, crack!

The shots rang out in rapid succession.

Then Young Wild West and his partners took a hand in the shooting.

Crack! Crack! Crack!

Three distinct reports rang out and as many of the Highbinders dropped, either killed outright or mortally wounded.

But before our friends could get down and rescue Hop Wah the scoundrels got him around a turn and were making for the narrow passage that led into the cavern.

As they reached the passage with him Hop uttered a shrill cry for help.

"Hully upee, Misl Wild!" he shouted.

Ting Sung struck him over the mouth with the flat of his broad-bladed knife.

"Shut up!" he cried. "Stop, or I will cut your tongue out!"

Terrified beyond measure, the captive lapsed into silence.

Into the cavern they rushed, and then through the dark part into the lighted chamber beyond.

All but Ting Sung and the two who were carrying Hop remained in the darkness of the main cave to wait for the three who had spoiled their cruel sport.

They felt that they could easily kill them if they dared follow them that far.

CHAPTER VIII.

PLENTY OF EXCITEMENT.

Young Wild West and his two partners were not long in finding the trail of the Highbinders and they followed it on a run.

Just before they got to the dry watercourse they lost it as the ground was too hard there to leave the prints of the villains' feet.

But they quite naturally concluded that they had followed the watercourse, so they went that way.

In this way they reached the mouth of the cavern, and here it was they waited until all of a sudden they heard the sounds of voices close by.

Our hero was not long in finding out that there was some one the other side of the perpendicular wall of rock that was right alongside the mouth of the cave.

The voices were so indistinct that they could hardly tell whether they were those of Chinamen or white men.

"We must get up there in some way," said Wild. "I guess we have run the scoundrels down. I thought at first that they had taken to this cave here, but it seems that they are on the other side of that cliff. Come on up this way and we may get around it."

There was a sharp ascent the opposite side of the watercourse, and it was up this that our friends made their way.

They found that they would be able to get around to the place where the voices had been heard, but they would have to do some pretty good climbing to accomplish it.

Up they went along the slope, now crawling and then walking, but using the greatest of caution all the while.

They reached a point where they could see what was going on just as Hop Wah uttered his despairing cry for help.

Then Young Wild West let his lariat go with the result already told.

The Highbinders put up such a determined fight that our friends were held in check, in spite of the fact that they dropped three of them.

The fact was that the wily Chinamen held Hop in such a position as they made for the passage that it would be dangerous to shoot at them.

They did not want to hit him, and there was no time for getting their rifles on them.

"That is a very neat trap," said our hero, nodding at the passage. "If we start in there we will feel the point of a knife before we see who does it. Boys, we must be a little bit careful."

"I reckon you're right, Wild," answered the scout. "Them galoots is worse than a lot of Injuns. They fight different an' they're about as ugly."

"They were surely going to give Hop the hottest bath he ever had," remarked Dart, as he turned and looked at the steaming pool.

"The fiends meant to scald him to death," our hero said. "They certainly must have it in for Hop. No wonder he was so frightened when they attacked us along the trail this morning! That fellow with the hat was the same one who sat on the rock with the umbrella over his head. He must be the leader of the gang."

"That's right," nodded Jim. "But he's got three less to lead now. I guess the last of the three just drew his last breath. They meant us and they got it themselves."

"Good for 'em!" exclaimed Charlie grimly. "Ther measly coyotes ain't human, anyhow."

"Well," said Wild, after he had thought for a few seconds, "we have got to get Hop out of their clutches. If they only keep him alive a while I am certain we can do it. It won't do for us to go into that passage, though. We'll try to get in from above. Come on!"

The daring young deadshot had caught sight of smoke rising from the surface of the hill back of the passage, and he knew right away that it must come from the cave the Chinese had sought refuge in.

They forgot all about the dinner they had missed and pushed up the hill with as little noise as possible.

It was not an easy task to get up there, but they finally succeeded, and then it was that they could see the smoke coming through the narrow rift.

Wild gave a satisfied nod.

"I guess we're on the right track," he remarked.

Following the fissure along, he found that it extended clear across the oval top of what he was certain was the cave.

A few stunted pines grew around it, but none on the oval spot.

It was near the foot of one of the pines that the rift came to an end on one side, and on the other it was lost in a solid bed of rock.

As Wild flattened himself out on the ground Charlie and Jim crouched down and waited for him to report what he could see.

It was very little that he could see, however. The smoke interfered too much for that.

But presently it died down a little for want of fresh fuel, perhaps, and then he could see the forms of human beings below.

He could not distinguish them enough to have told that they were Chinamen if he had not already known they were, and he was not able to detect Hop among them.

For fully ten minutes Wild remained at the spot, being compelled to take his face away from the opening every now and then.

Finally the smoke died out nearly altogether and then he could see the smoldering embers of the fire that had caused it.

It was not directly beneath him, but off to the left of where he was lying.

Directly beneath him was a ledge, and from this there was a slant down into the cavern.

The secret headquarters of the Highbinders being located fully fifty feet away from the opening the smoke had been coming through, there was little or no daylight that reached them from it.

When Wild suddenly saw a lighted lantern in the cave he came to the conclusion that the Chinese villains had allowed the fire to die out on purpose to cut off the smoke from rising.

But if they did this they were too late, for their hiding-place had been discovered.

It was but a few seconds before his eyes became accustomed to the dull light the lantern sent forth in the cave and then he managed to distinguish the bound form of a man lying on the rocky floor.

At least Wild thought it was a bound form, but it might have been a dead body.

If the latter case, it was all over with Hop Wah.

But our hero could not bring himself to believe that the faithful celestial was dead.

He got up and told Charlie to take a look.

It happened to be the only place where a view of the cave could be obtained from.

"Great gimlets!" exclaimed the scout, when he had spent a minute gazing below by aid of the rather uncertain light. "If we could only git down there! There's only three of ther pig-tailed galoots there with Hop. They've got him tied up, so they ain't killed him yet. I reckon they must be waitin' to git another chance to put him in ther b'ilin' water."

"Well, there is room enough for a fellow to get through here and then sit on the ledge, which is not more than five feet below. But how about getting down where Hop is?" remarked Jim, as he took a look.

"There would not be any trouble in getting down there; the thing would be to get up again," replied our hero. "That rock is pretty slanting, and it looks rather slippery. You could slide down there in a jiffy!"

Dart shrugged his shoulders.

"A fellow would be in a regular hornets' nest then," he remarked.

Our friends were in a quandary.

They could see their Chinese servant and also some of his captors, but they could not get to him.

Finally Wild determined to drop through on the ledge below and trust to luck to find a way to get farther.

When he spoke of his intention neither of his partners raised any objections.

Wild handed his rifle to Jim and then boldly put his feet through the opening.

He could not tell whether he was seen from below or not, but took his chances on it.

Down he lowered himself until he felt the ledge below.

Then he drew down his head and dropped to a sitting posture on the rock.

He now had a good view of the interior of the cavern.

The three Chinamen, one of whom he could tell was the leader of the band, were busy arranging some blankets on the ground.

When they finally sat down on them he knew they were simply waiting for the Americans who had interfered with them to go away.

"The rest of the gang must be somewhere else on the watch for us," Wild thought. "Well, I guess they will keep right on watching."

He started to crawl along the ledge, having found by this time that it extended some distance.

There might be a way for him to work his way down over a route that could be easily climbed again.

He soon gave an exultant nod, for he had found just such a place.

But at that very moment there was a commotion directly below him, it seemed, and the next minute one of the Highbinders entered the cave on his tiptoes and spoke in a low tone to the leader.

That individual appeared to be agreeably surprised, for he nodded his head, danced a few steps and then put on his yellow mantle.

He motioned the fellow out, after which he hoisted his parasol and picked up the lantern.

The next minute there was the sound of footsteps and then ten Chinamen marched into the cavern.

Two of them were carrying a burden, which Wild was astounded to find out was the unconscious form of a young white girl.

That the ten newcomers had not been with the Highbinders when he saw them that morning, or when Hop came so near meeting with such a horrible death, he was quite certain.

They all bowed low before the leader and then the girl was put down upon the ground near the helpless form of Hop.

Of course Wild could not understand a word of what was being said, but he easily guessed that the ten Chinamen had been on their way to meet the rest in the cave, and that they had managed to catch the girl and make her a prisoner.

At first Wild thought it might be Arietta or one of the others belonging to his party, but he soon saw that such was not the case.

The girl was a stranger to him.

Things were getting mighty interesting now, so he thought.

He had a double duty to perform now.

Not only must his Chinese servant be rescued, but the girl as well.

But how was he to accomplish it?

He was pondering over the subject when suddenly several shots rang out from the direction the newcomers had appeared.

The reports sounded muffled, but he knew that whoever were firing the shots were not a great distance off.

The Highbinders were very uneasy when they heard the shots.

The yellow-mantled leader chattered excitedly and made several gestures, and then nearly all of them rushed out.

Crack, crack, crack! Crack-c-ck!

The firing was getting fast and furious now.

While Wild was listening he heard a sound behind him, and, turning, he found Charlie crawling toward him.

"I heard ther shootin' an' I thought I'd come down here, Wild," he explained as he got close enough.

"I'm glad you did, Charlie," was the reply.

"Jim will stay up there an' wait for us."

"All right."

"Great gimlets! They've got a gal down there, hey?"

"Yes, they just brought her in. There's ten more of the Highbinders for us to tackle, too."

"Is that so?"

"Yes, it is more than likely that it is the girl's friends who have attacked the Chinamen."

"Then you're sartin it ain't one of our gals, hey?"

"Certain of it."

"I thought maybe it was at first."

"So did I."

"What are you goin' to do, Wild?"

"I was just thinking. Go back and get Jim to hand yo my lariat through the fissure."

"All right."

The scout crawled back and stood up so his head protruded through the crack.

He told Jim what he wanted and soon returned with the lariat.

He was just about to pass it over to our hero when his foot slipped in some manner, and before he could catch himself he went shooting down into the cavern below!

Wild was thunderstruck.

How could the scout have been so careless?

Charlie was on his feet at the bottom before the Highbinders fairly knew that he was among them.

"Whoopee!" he yelled, determined to make the best of it.

"Look out, you yaller galoots! Your last hour has arrove!"

The Highbinders fell back in wild alarm.

CHAPTER IX.

WILD MEETS THE CAPTIVE GIRL'S FATHER AND FRIENDS.

Young Wild West remained remarkably cool when Cheyenne Charlie landed in the cave below and let out a yell.

He would shoot the first man who attempted to attack the scout.

But when he saw the Highbinders fall back in terror he made up his mind that something might be done.

The first thing he did was to throw an end of his lariat down.

It was the noose end, of course.

"Ther measly coyotes is scared to death, Wild," said Charlie. "I'll let Hop loose in a jiffy. And then I'll send up ther gal with ther rope."

Wild did not answer.

The Chinamen had not yet seen him, so he thought it was just as well that they should not.

Charlie rushed at them and drove them back in a dark corner before his leveled revolver.

Then he turned, and with a couple of quick slashes cut Hop Wah loose.

"Light out of here, Hop!" he exclaimed; "you ain't got no time to lose. Wild is right up there. Foller ther rope."

Hop was too overjoyed at the chance to escape to make a reply.

He darted for the spot where the lariat hung.

But if the Highbinders had been frightened when Charlie slid so suddenly in their midst they were over it now.

They saw that their intended victim was about to escape, and that brought them to their senses.

Shrieking and snarling like a pack of wolves, they darted for the escaping prisoner.

Crack! Crack!

Cheyenne Charlie began firing now.

But the yellow demons came right on.

Half a dozen of the Highbinders came rushing in through the passage at that moment and the scout was caught between the two parties.

But Hop reached the lariat and ran nimbly up the steep ascent.

Charlie kicked the lantern over and the light became extinguished.

He was fighting hand to hand with the Highbinders now, and he realized that he was going to have a tough time of it.

But when he kicked the lantern over he made it all the worse for him.

Wild dared not shoot now, since he could not distinguish the scout from any of the rest in the darkness.

Suddenly the captive girl came to and began screaming loudly.

Then more shooting was heard in the outside cave.

"This way, Charlie!" Wild called out, as Hop got safely upon the ledge. "Fetch the girl with you! I am dropping the rope."

Charlie managed to get hold of the girl, but it was impossible for him to get through the swarming Chinamen. The next moment he cried out:

"They've got me, Wild!"

There was a fierce scuffling on the ground in the dark cave and then the noise quieted down somewhat.

Wild thought it best to get Hop out, even if Charlie had been caught.

It was quite certain that some of the Highbinders had seen him come up, and that meant that a fusillade of bullets would be coming that way as soon as the villains got a light.

"Follow me, Hop!" our hero whispered. "We'll beat them yet. I hardly think they will harm Charlie for a while, as they are pressed too hard to dare to do any killing now. They don't know what moment they are going to be swooped down upon and captured. The friends of the girl are near by and they have been doing some fierce shooting, whether they have done much damage or not."

"Me allee light, Misler Wild," Hop answered rather faintly. "Me do just likee you say."

Wild reached the part of the opening that was wide enough to get through and straightened up.

Jim Dart was kneeling there, pale and excited.

"Help me up, Jim," said our hero.

Dart hastened to do so.

"Now, Hop, come on."

Up popped the scared face of their celestial servant.

Jim yanked him up in a hurry.

Then looking at Wild, he asked:

"Where is Charlie?"

"The Highbinders have got him."

"I thought so. That's too bad."

"Well, they won't have him long. You heard the firing back there, didn't you?"

"Yes, it sounded as though it came from the wide mouth of the cavern that we struck before we climbed up the hill and saw them about to throw Hop in the boiling pool."

"That is about where it did come from, I think. The yellow scoundrels have got a girl a prisoner, and it is no doubt her friends who have followed them up."

"They have got the girl and Charlie, too, then?"

"Yes. Charlie was doing his best to save the girl after he cut Hop loose. But he made a mistake in putting out the lantern that was on the floor of the cave. I didn't dare to shoot then for fear of hitting him or the girl."

"Well, what is to be done now?"

"You and Hop stay right here. I will find the men who were doing so much shooting at the Highbinders."

Hop sat down near the fissure.

He was pretty badly used up from the thrilling experience he had gone through.

Wild hastened away and soon came to a point where he could look down and see the mouth of the cavernous place.

Two men were standing there, rifles in hand.

By their looks they were miners.

"Hello!" our hero called out loud enough for them to hear.

They looked up in surprise.

"What's the trouble?" Wild asked.

"A gang of Chinamen stole my darter an' took her in this cave," answered the elder of the two. "We're after 'em."

"How many are there of you?"

"There was seven, but we lost a man jest now. Four is inside ther cave tryin' ter work their way ter where they took my darter."

"Well, the Chinese have got a partner of mine a prisoner, too. You fellows want to look out how you go in there. The scoundrels are Highbinders from Frisco. They are not like the ordinary Chinamen, you know. They will fight to the death."

The speaker was amazed to hear this.

"So they've got a pard of yourn a prisoner, too, hey?" he observed. "Do yer think ther yaller skunks means ter kill their prisoners?"

"Well, I hope not."

The man looked somewhat relieved.

"My name is Jed Warren," he said. "Me an' my folks an' pards was on ther way ter Boilin' Butte when ther Chinamen come erlong. We didn't think nothin' wrong of 'em, an' they got putty close. Then one of 'em suddenly swooped down on my darter Bessie, who was ridin' horse-back ahead, an' grabbed her from ther saddle an' rode up ther little gully here. They was all mounted on good horses, an' as they got ther start of us we couldn't come up with

'em till they got right here. Then we fired at 'em, but it was too late! They got in ther cave with Nellie, an' now they've got her in some back place where we can't git without bein' stabbed or shot in ther dark."

"I know just where the place is," answered Wild. "Just leave two of your men in the cave to watch the place where the Chinamen are, and the rest of you come up here."

"All right, young feller. I don't know who yer are, but yer 'pear ter be a mighty cool one. I reckon yer know what yer are talkin' about all right."

"My name is Young Wild West."

"Oh, I reckon I've heard tell of yer, then."

"Well, come on up. We haven't any time to lose. We must get the young lady and my partner out of the clutches of the Highbinders as soon as possible."

"Right yer are, Young Wild West!"

Jed Warren was wonderfully cheerful all at once.

It did not take him long to let his companions know what was up, and then he came around and climbed up to where our hero stood, followed by three others.

The men were all excited, but they looked to the young deadshot to help them out.

"Ther wimmen an' children are back on ther trail with ther wagons," said one. "If another gang of them Chinese should come along it might go bad with 'em."

"They are all in the cave below us, I guess," said Wild. "Just keep a stiff upper lip now and everything will come out all right."

Our hero's words were very encouraging to them.

Jim and Hop were where Wild had left them, and when the strangers saw the Chinaman standing there they took him to be one of the villains who had stolen the girl.

They were going to open fire on him, but Wild quickly stopped them.

"That is my servant," he said. "The Highbinders kidnaped him from the horse-shed of the hotel in Boiling Butte and brought him out here to cook him alive. That is what brought myself and two partners here. We got our Chinaman from them, but in doing it Cheyenne Charlie got caught. He was trying to rescue the young lady, and if it had not been for that he might have got away. But you can bet that no partner of mine ever leaves a female in distress. We are not built that way."

The men looked admiringly at the handsome boy with the long chestnut hair.

He was a perfect hero, and they knew it.

It did not take long to make them understand just how the cavern was located under them, and then they began studying a way to get down there and rescue the two captives.

Wild knew very well that the business must be done by strategy.

There must be close to twenty-five of the Highbinders in the underground place, and they were all desperate villains.

He lay down and peered through the fissure in the natural roof of the cave.

All was still down there and it was dark as a pocket.

He decided to go down upon the ledge again.

He quickly informed his companions of his intention and then dropped noiselessly down.

Listening a moment and hearing nothing, he dropped upon his hands and knees and started to crawl along the ledge, in the hope of getting to a point where he could see something.

He was forced to go around a slight turn in following the ledge, and as he did so the faint light that came in through the fissure became obliterated.

He paused a moment and listened.

Faint whisperings came to his ears, and then he knew the Highbinders were waiting in the dark in the cave.

Wild moved forward again.

But he had not crawled more than six feet when—

Bump!

His head struck something that was slowly moving toward him!

The brave boy realized what it was instantly.

He had come in contact with one of the Chinamen, who was crawling along the ledge.

Without the least hesitation, he struck out with his clenched fist.

The blow landed with a resounding whack.

There was a gasp, followed by a scrambling noise and then down the rugged descent went the yellow villain he had come in contact with.

A yell came from his lips as he went, too, and that gave the alarm to those below.

The next minute a lantern flashed in the cave.

Wild was lying close to the ledge now and could not be seen.

But he could see by the light of the lantern that there was a big crowd of the Highbinders in the cave.

It would be almost certain death to go down among them.

He turned to crawl back and go out above.

Just as he did so the lantern below was extinguished.

The boy was doing some hard thinking as he made his way back to the rift in the natural roof of the cave.

"There is only one way to do it, as I see," he muttered. "Hop has got to work some of his magic on them. He will have to go down among them and save Charlie and the girl."

With this decision in his mind, Wild raised up and showed himself to those waiting above.

Jim helped him out and then he turned to the anxious members of Jed Warren's party and said:

"The whole gang of the Highbinders is right below, but it is impossible to get down there among them, unless you want to die in a hurry. I have an idea by which we may save the prisoners. Hop, I want you to go down there."

The Chinaman turned a ghastly hue.

"Me no wantee die, Misler Wild," he said pleadingly.

"Of course you don't. You want to live, and you want Cheyenne Charlie and the young lady to live, too. You must go down there and work some of your magic on the Highbinders. They are very superstitious. I guess, and if you can't fool them you can't fool no one!"

Hop's face lighted up.

"Me tly," he said.

CHAPTER X.

HOP DOES SOME GREAT WORK.

Hop Wah knew considerable of the customs of the Highbinders.

He also feared them more than any other sect on earth.

They were composed of the most vicious and relentless of the Chinese race.

But Hop was going down among them in the cave.

He had told Young Wild West he would try, and he was going to keep his word.

"Me go down," he said to Wild; "if me havee chancee me lettee Misler Charlie loose and showee way out through cavee."

"All right, Hop. If they find you out and catch you we will drop down there and take the chance of a fight with them. That's the only way."

Hop now began arranging to go down into the dark cave.

He always had something in the way of queer and wonderful things about his person which he sometimes used to mystify those who wanted him to shew them a trick.

Before dropping down upon the ledge beneath the narrow opening he filled and lighted a pipe.

"What are you going to do, smoke?" Jim Dart asked.

"Yes, me smokee; me wantee light maybe putty quicke; me havee no time to lightee match; me usee fire flom pipe."

"You are going to try to get out by the way you came in, then?" questioned Wild.

"Yes, me tly to takee Misler Charlie an' um girl outee dat way."

"All right, then. Jim, you and three of the men will go around there and join the two who are guarding the place now. Mr. Warren will stay here with me."

Jim bowed.

The three companions of Warren were ready to do just as they were told, and they now looked to Jim as their leader.

The four walked off just as Hop dropped through the opening.

"Misler Wild comee down lillie way," said Hop.

"Yes, that's what I'm going to do," our hero answered in a whisper.

"An' what am I goin' ter do?" asked Warren.

"You are going to stay right here and do just what I call out for you to do," said Wild.

"Very well. I put ther greatest of dependence in you, Young Wild West."

"Well, I am glad to know that you do. Everything has got to run as smooth as clockwork if we expect to save my

partner and your daughter. There must not be the least friction between us."

"You kin depend on me ter do exactly as you say."

Wild nodded and then followed the celestial to the ledge below.

Hop was waiting in a listening attitude.

The Highbinders were doing a rather earnest bit of talking in low tones, and he was trying to catch what they were saying.

But he could not hear the words plain enough to catch them.

He began crawling to the point where he had come up with the help of the lariat.

Wild still had the lariat, and, without a word, Hop reached back and caught hold of the end of it.

Our hero knew what he intended to do.

They crawled to the proper place—or the best place for operations, in fact—and then Hop put his lips close to Wild's ear and whispered:

"Me go down; Misler Wild stay here. He know whatee do; me no tellee him."

The young deadshot nodded.

Hop was keeping his lighted pipe covered with his hand, and he now raised it a little and got it going pretty good.

Then he placed it in a pocket and began slowly descending the incline.

He could have gone down without the aid of the rope, but he kept hold of it and pulled it taut as he went down, Wild holding to the other end.

The daring Chinaman reached the bottom and stood in the cave without being discovered.

Some of the Highbinders were walking about noiselessly, and Hop could tell that they were in a rather nervous state.

Then he did a very bold thing.

He began walking about among them.

Then he found it easier than he had expected to.

Ting Sung was sitting on a rock, his parasol over his head, trying to appear calm and indifferent.

But he was making a miserable failure of it.

Ever since the firing had ceased the Highbinders had been very quiet.

Even when the fellow tumbled down from the ledge, after being hit by Wild, they had not gone into a state of excitement.

But they had not sent any one else up there.

The fact was that the Chinaman did not know what had knocked him down.

He had an idea that a stone had dropped upon him, or something of the kind.

Hop stepped around and stood behind the leader of the Highbinders.

Just then that wonderful man spoke aloud.

"Brothers," he said, "the American dogs cannot get in."

A murmur of approval went up from the assemblage.

"They are waiting for us to come out," went on Ting Sung, "and that makes it bad."

Several of his hearers admitted this by giving grunts.

"The ten brothers who came last should now have caught the girl and brought her here. If they had not we would not have been compelled to fight so many Americans. If we let the girl go her friends may go away. Then we can kill the friends of the man we have got here and catch the traitor who is with them. He must die in the boiling pool. I have sworn it, and when Ting Sung swears that a thing shall be done it cannot fail."

Hop Wah was rapidly losing his fear of the Highbinders.

While the followers of the villainous leader were applauding what he said, Hop moved up a little closer to him.

When he was close enough to touch him he began putting handfuls of something which he took from one of his capacious pockets on the rock close to the Highbinder leader.

Hop had such a sly way of doing things that his movements were not detected.

The lighted lantern was now throwing out its rays on the floor before the rock.

But it failed to light up the faces of the Highbinders, who were now standing about their ruler in a circle. The stuff Hop Wah was placing on the rock was of a very explosive nature.

What a Chinaman don't know about fireworks is scarcely worth knowing.

When the wily celestial had got a sufficient quantity there he paused and looked around for the two captives.

He soon discerned them crouching on the ground a few feet distant.

The girl was sitting on a blanket, her hands bound behind her.

Hop was pleased when he saw that she was conscious and apparently pretty calm and collected.

"Kneel, brothers!" said Ting Sung suddenly, and swear to obey your leader in everything. Ting Sung is a great mandarin of the Highbinders!"

"Ting Sung is a great mandarin of the Highbinders!" repeated the yellow scoundrels in unison.

Of course Hop Wah kneeled with the rest.

And during the short space of time he was on his knees he took out his pipe and puffed on it until he had a live coal in the top of the bowl.

Then, as they were all rising, he reached over and let the lighted pipe fall in the heap of powder he had placed on the rock behind the leader of the gang.

Back he stepped and then there was a quick puff, followed by a lurid glow and Ting Sung pitched headlong from the rock.

Instantly the cavern was filled with a dense smoke.

But Hop knew this was coming, and already he was cutting the bonds of Cheyenne Charlie.

The scout realized that help had come, and the moment he found he was free he leaped to his feet.

Hop said not a word, but turned his attention to the girl.

As he cut her hands free she uttered a scream of fright.

But no notice was taken of this by the Highbinders.

They were paralyzed by what had happened and the majority of them were lying on the ground, where they had dropped when they saw their leader flop over.

Charlie caught the girl by the arm and whispered:

"Don't make any noise, miss; help is here! We're goin' to git out of this."

She heard and understood, for she instantly got upon her feet and remained silent.

"Comee this way, Misler Charlie."

It was the first Hop had opened his lips to speak since he left Wild on the ledge above.

The scout was dumbfounded when he found it was their servant who had liberated them.

But he lost no time in following him through the dense, choking smoke.

Hop had changed his mind about going out the regular way.

He thought they might be able to get up to the ledge.

But he made a mistake, for this was the point the Highbinders made for as soon as they partly recovered from the effects of the explosion.

The first thing Hop knew he was right in the midst of a dozen of the Highbinders and was being pushed and jostled.

Charlie and the girl lost him in the confusion.

The latter knew the way she had been brought into the place and she had a vague idea of the direction the passage was.

The scout had hold of her arm, and as she pushed her way ahead he naturally went with her.

They found an opening and hastily went through.

But they were not in the right passage.

Less than fifteen feet through it and they came to a solid wall of rock.

"We've gone ther wrong way," whispered the scout. "We'll have to go back if we want to git out of here."

"Yes," was the faint reply from the trembling girl.

But just then a flood of light illumined the cave they had just left.

Several of the Highbinders had lighted tapers at a command from Ting Sung.

The burning tapers illumined the place much better than three or four lanterns would have done.

Hop, being foiled in making his escape by means of the rope, mingled with the villains and strove to act like one of them.

He was able to carry out the deception.

The daring celestial was desperate now.

It struck him that if he could get the leader out of the way he would be all right.

He had more of the explosive powder in his pockets, so he quickly got out a handful.

He scattered it around with one sweep and the burning tapers promptly set it off.

A whirling burst of flame and then the Highbinders went to the ground to a man.

Even Hop was knocked down by the explosion, and he fell upon one of the villains who were so anxious to take his life.

Acting on a sudden impulse, Hop caught him by the throat.

Then there was a quick struggle.

The villain he was clutching could not cry out, but he managed to pull his ugly, broad-bladed knife.

Hop knew what he was up to and quickly wrenched the weapon from him.

Then he pointed the blade the right way and struck with it.

The Highbinder died by his own knife!

Hop quickly dragged the body to the spot where Cheyenne Charlie and the girl had been lying.

Then he started to find the two, feeling his way among the coughing, sneezing lot of scoundrels.

The smoke was fierce, and he could not help from coughing himself.

"Ting Sung is a great mandarin!" came from the Chinaman nearest him.

It was Ting Sung himself.

Hop raised the knife he had in his hand and struck savagely at the leader.

He was too close to miss.

With a groan Ting Sung fell back into his arms.

Hop carefully dragged him over and let him drop beside the other victim of the broad-bladed knife.

Ting Sung still clutched the parasol, and, taking it from his hand, Hop put it over his head.

"Light the tapers!" he said in Chinese, giving a pretty good imitation of Ting Sung.

In less than half a minute half a dozen tapers were burning.

Then waving his hand for the men to remain right where they were, Hop Wah marched boldly into the passage that led to the outside cave.

He was satisfied that Cheyenne Charlie and the girl must have gone that way, since he saw nothing of them in the smoky place.

CHAPTER XI.

ARIETTA TAKES A HAND IN THE GAME.

After eating dinner at the hotel Arietta began to grow anxious about her young lover.

Con Carney had told her what Wild said, but she did not always do just as our hero said.

Arietta had a mind of her own.

When an hour passed and there were no signs of Wild and his partners returning, she turned to Anna and Eloise and said:

"I guess I'll go and look them up. If they have fallen in the hands of the Highbinders they will need some one to get them out."

Anna and Eloise never opposed anything she proposed.

Next to Young Wild West, they believed her to have the best judgment of any one in their party.

"You are going to look for them, Miss Arietta?" asked the Irishman, who had been sticking pretty close to the girls, as our hero had told him to.

"Yes, I am going to look for them."

"Let me go with you, then. I am after knowin' which way they went."

Arietta looked at him keenly.

She saw that he was in earnest, and it occurred to her that he might be of some help to her.

"All right, Mr. Carney," she answered; "you may go, but I want you to do just as I tell you."

"Faith, I will do that!" he exclaimed.

"I guess you two girls will be all right," said the brave girl, turning to Anna and Eloise. "Just stay right in the house with the landlord's wife."

"All right," they replied.

Arietta and Carney left the house by the kitchen door.

They did not want the men hanging around the bar of the hotel to know that they were leaving.

They were not seen by any of them, either, but some one else observed them and recognized them.

The some one else was Thundering Ike, the leader of the band of villains that had tried to rob them.

The scoundrel was afraid to go back to the hotel because he did not know that Young Wild West was not there.

He was playing cards and drinking with three of his men in a secluded spot not far from the hotel.

The moment he saw the girl he thought of a plan to get square with Young Wild West.

"Come, fellers!" he exclaimed, jumping to his feet; "there goes Young Wild West's gal and that Irishman. We've got 'em!"

His companions were in the humor for anything just then and they jumped to do his bidding.

Arietta and Carney hastened along the trail unconscious of the fact that they were being followed.

As Wild and his partners had done, they soon found the beaten trail and then hurried on till they came to the dry watercourse.

Arietta was pretty smart at following a trail and she was not long in discovering that the Chinamen had gone that way.

Then there were the footprints of whites, too, and they must have been made by Wild, Charlie and Jim.

The brave girl carried her rifle in her hand and the Irishman had his slung over his shoulder.

They were working their way along and were not more than two hundred yards from the wide mouth of the cavern when Thundering Ike, who was close behind them with his three followers, thought it time to make the capture.

All four of them were more than half intoxicated from the liquor they had been drinking, and they were about as reckless as they could be.

But they tried to be as still as possible, notwithstanding.

Leading the way, Thundering Ike sprang after the girl and Carney.

They heard them as they were within a dozen feet of them.

The instant Arietta saw them she leveled her rifle at the leader and exclaimed:

"Stop where you are!"

Thundering Ike stopped, and rather abruptly, too.

His companions followed suit.

"Put down your gun, miss," said Thundering Ike, as he quickly recovered from his surprise.

"When I get ready I will," she answered.

"Begob! You had better look out!" spoke up Carney, raising the weapon he was carrying.

But one of the villains had him covered before he could get aim at any of them.

"Drop that, you fool!" he cried. "If you don't I'll shoot yer as dead as a mackerel!"

Carney dropped the rifle.

Then the man advanced toward him, while the other two drew their revolvers.

"Stop where you are!" commanded Arietta. "Another step forward from either of you and Thundering Ike will fall with a bullet through his heart!"

They stopped.

"Shoot her!" roared their leader. "Don't let her shoot me, you fools!"

One of the scoundrels was going to obey, but Arietta quickly moved her rifle so it covered him.

He was in the very act of pressing the trigger of his six-shooter when the rifle cracked.

Down went the scoundrel.

The smoking muzzle of the rifle covered Thundering Ike so quickly that he let go the revolver he had seized to pull from his belt.

"That's one!" exclaimed Arietta, coolly. "Who will be the next?"

Carney took advantage of the excitement to drop behind a convenient rock.

He now drew his revolver and opened fire on the three remaining villains.

At the first shot one of them dropped with a bullet in his shoulder.

The second shot missed altogether and the third took a lock of hair from the head of Thundering Ike.

The Irishman fired again and brought the other fellow down with a bullet in his leg as he was starting to run away.

Thundering Ike was the only one standing now, and he was covered by Arietta's rifle.

A smile of triumph illumined the beautiful girl's face.

"Mr. Carney, you are not such a bad shot after all," she said. "Just step out and take the weapons from Thundering Ike. We will make a prisoner of him."

"All right, miss," was the reply.

As the Irishman came from behind the rock the man he had last wounded fired a shot at him.

It missed him by an inch or two.

"Stop that, you murderin' hound!" he cried.

"If he tries it again I will shoot him," said Arietta, calmly.

"Keep Thundering Ike covered and I will attend to the other two."

Carney advanced with leveled revolver.

Just then the wounded man raised his shooter to fire again. Crack!

Arietta fired and shot him through the wrist.

There was nothing left for her to do but to shoot, and she did not want to kill him, because he was not trying to kill her.

That settled the villain, however.

"Don't shoot no more," he cried, rolling about in agony.

Carney took his eyes off Thundering Ike for a second, and, taking advantage of it, the villain bounded away up the side of the little gully into the bushes.

He was out of sight before Arietta could bring him down.

She was in the act of starting after him to get a sight of him so she could hit him in the foot or leg, when the crackling of revolvers sounded not far distant.

"Wild, I'll bet!" cried the daring girl. "Come, Mr. Carney!"

"I'll be roight there, begob!" answered the Irishman, and away he ran after her.

Arietta knew very little of the article known as fear.

It had occurred to her that her dashing young lover was doing some of the shooting she heard, and that meant that he was likely in danger.

Two minutes later she came upon a startling scene.

Crouching behind rocks and boulders before the mouth of a large cavern were half a dozen men shooting at a crowd of Chinamen, who were running wildly about in the cavern.

It did not take Arietta longer than a second to recognize one of them as Jim Dart.

She paused, as she did not want to run in range of the bullets that were coming from the Chinamen in the cavern.

"Mr. Carney," she said, coolly dropping behind a convenient rock, "we must take a hand in this game. Jim Dart is there."

"All right, miss," answered the Irishman, dropping his brogue, as he sometimes did. "Shall I shoot?"

"Yes, and shoot to kill! The Highbinders must have Wild and Charlie, because I can see nothing of them."

Carney took careful aim and hit one of the Highbinders at the first shot.

Then Arietta began shooting.

When she had fired four shots not a live Chinaman was to be seen in the cave.

But just then one popped up from behind a rock not far distant.

It was Hop Wah!

He had the gorgeous parasol of Ting Sung in his hand, and when he recognized the brave girl and her companion he cried:

"Hoolay! Missy Arietta comee! She shootee allee samee Young Wild West! Hoolay, Misler Jim!"

Then for the first time Jim saw who it was who had helped them out.

He waved his hat with joy.

"Just in time, Arietta!" he shouted.

"Where's Wild, Jim?" she asked, not paying any attention to his joyful manner.

"He is not far away, but Charlie is in the cavern somewhere in the clutches of the Highbinders."

"Can't you save him?"

"We are doing the best we can. Wild may have accomplished it by this time. There is a young lady captive there, too."

"Is that so?"

"Yes. These men are her friends. Her father is up on the hill there, where Wild told him to wait."

"Is Wild up there anywhere?"

"Yes, he is close to there."

"I'll go up, then."

"Me go, too," spoke up Hop, and away he went with his parasol over his head.

Hop had managed to get out of the cavern very neatly, but just as he did the two Chinamen, who were watching, discovered who he was.

A shout from them brought the whole gang out.

Then the short fight had taken place with disastrous results to the Highbinders.

Arietta had arrived in time to turn the tide.

Jim expected the villains would make another attempt to get out, so he waited there with the five men who belonged to Jed Warren's party.

"Hip hi! Hooley!" yelled Hop Wah, as he climbed the hill. "Evelyt'ing lovely now! Putty soonee Misler Charlie gittee out of um cave with um young lady! Then evelybody look likee bully boy with um glasse eye!"

The Celestial was certainly a delighted mortal.

It was the arrival of Arietta and the Irishman that put him in such a good humor.

"Ther haythen is after actin' like a crazy man, begob!" remarked Carney, loud enough for him to hear it.

"Ilishman actee allee samee fool!" Hop answered. "He no shootee stlaight enough to hit side of mountain!"

"Git out with ye!" retorted Carney.

"Me keepee sun off Ilishman's head; sun makee lose um blains," and with that Hop placed his fancy umbrella, or whatever it might be called, over Carney's head.

Arietta could not help laughing, as grave as matters were just then.

She was very anxious to see Wild, for she depended on him to rescue Charlie.

Jed Warren was a badly surprised man when he saw the girl coming up the hill.

"Where is Young Wild West?" Arietta asked him.

"Down there somewhere," Warren answered, pointing to the fissure.

"Me go down and finde!" exclaimed Hop. "Me no 'flaid of um Highbinders now!"

Rushing to the opening, he tossed the parasol on the ground and dropped through.

The moment his head disappeared two shots rang out from under the spot where Arietta was standing.

"What has happened now?" she exclaimed, looking anxious.

CHAPTER XII.

CONCLUSION.

Cheyenne Charlie knew it would never do to walk out and mingle with the excited Highbinders.

Since they had found a temporary hiding-place in the blind passage, he decided to wait there until something turned up in their favor.

"Jest keep as cool as you kin," he whispered to the girl. "We will git out all right."

It was just then that the second explosion took place.

"Hop is raisin' thunder!" he thought. "I wonder what he is up to, anyhow? I jest wish I could find ther rope that Wild's got."

He moved toward the mouth of the niche, but was forced back again by the stifling smoke.

"Oh, this is awful!" groaned Bessie Warren.

"Never mind," Charlie said. "Jest keep cool."

They waited right there for a couple of minutes.

Then wild yells came from the Highbinders and the rushing of feet told them that the scoundrels were leaving the dark cave.

"Now is our time!" exclaimed the scout, as he heard the sounds of the footsteps dying out. "Come on, gal! We're going to git out of here."

Out of the passage he went, followed closely by the girl, who was putting the utmost faith in him.

They reached the place where they had been released by Hop Wah, and in the very dim light that came from above Charlie saw two forms stretched out on the floor of the cave.

The scout wanted to get his weapons, which lay on the ground somewhere.

He had matches in his pocket, so he took the risk of lighting one.

He then found his weapons, and also that the two forms on the floor were dead Highbinders.

There was plenty of shooting going on outside, and when the girl insisted on going out through the passage Charlie caught her firmly by the arm and said no.

Just then a voice called them from above.

It was Young Wild West.

The daring young deadshot had just returned from a trip to the opening to ask Warren if he had heard anything from Jim and the rest yet.

Wild had got a sight of Charlie and the girl just as the match went out.

"Come up, Charlie!" he called out. "Here is the lariat! Fasten it under the arms of the girl and I will haul her up."

"Good!" exclaimed the scout, while a cry of joy came from the lips of Bessie Warren.

The rope was fastened under her arms, and then up she went.

At that very instant half a dozen of the Highbinders came rushing in!

Crack!

Charlie fired into their midst.

Crack!

He let another shot go.

But two of them flung themselves upon him and prevented him from climbing the slanting side of the cavern.

Wild was pulling the girl up at the time, so he could do nothing to help the scout.

By the time he had landed her on the ledge, Charlie was overcome by the Highbinders.

"Hoolay!" cried a voice near Wild.

It was Hop Wah.

"Throw a light down there, Hop!" cried Wild. "Hurry up, before they kill Charlie!"

The Chinaman quickly pulled a bunch of tow from one of his pockets and lighted it.

Down it went over the slanting side of rough stone and landed on the ground.

The blazing bunch showed four forms bending over the form of Charlie.

They were trying to hold him down and bind him at the same time.

Crack! Crack! Crack! Crack!

Young Wild West fired four shots in quick succession.

And not one of them went wide of its mark.

Cheyenne Charlie sprang to his feet, pushing off the Chinaman as they fell on him.

"Whoopee!" he shouted. "I ain't hurt a bit! Wild, you sartinly did plug them yaller galoots! Here I come."

Up he clambered, catching the rope as our hero threw it to him.

The next minute he was safely on the ledge.

Then Bessie Warren was escorted to the opening and handed up.

Charlie went next to show that he was safe.

To his surprise, he found Arietta and Con Carney there.

"Come on up, Wild!" he called out. "Here's a surprise for you."

The next minute Wild's face showed above the opening.

"Et?" he exclaimed.

"I thought I had better come and take a hand in the game, Wild," she replied.

"And I'll bet you did, too. There was some fierce firing that I heard."

"Well, I was doing some of it, Wild. Mr. Carney did a little, too."

Hop was now hauled out by the scout, and he immediately picked up the parasol.

"Me allee samee big mandarin," he observed, walking about like a peacock.

Jed Warren stood looking on with his hand on his daughter's shoulder.

"I'm awful much obliged ter you all!" he exclaimed, when he thought it proper for him to speak.

"Don't mention it," answered our hero. "We had a very hot time with the Highbinders, and I think we had better finish the job by capturing what is left of them."

"I reckon there ain't any of 'em left," spoke up the scout. "Them four that you dropped was ther last of 'em. If there'd been any more they'd have showed up."

Wild could not believe that the whole gang had been cleaned out.

He followed the rest down the hill, with Arietta at his side.

When she told him how Thundering Ike had followed her and the Irishman and what happened in the gully a short distance from the cavern, the boy patted her on the shoulder.

"You did nobly, Et," he said. "But just leave it to me to wind up the career of Thundering Ike. He will try to kill me again, and when he does he will go down! I shan't take anything further from the scoundrel. Ordered his ruffians to shoot you, did he? Well, just wait till I draw bead on him!"

"Two of the villains lie in the gully wounded. Mr. Carney is responsible for it."

"And you shot one, so you say?"

"I had to, Wild. It was to save my own life."

"Oh, don't feel sorry that you did it, Et. You know that if a person is not ready to shoot in this region he is hardly ready to live."

"That's what I'm after beginnin' to think," spoke up Carney.

"Well, you ought to think that, anyhow," said Wild. "I am glad you showed what you could do with a shooter. If you hadn't helped Arietta out she might have got the worst of it."

Wild was not quite sure that all the Highbinders had fallen in the fight, so he advised that the men keep out of the cavern.

"You have gained your point," he said to them. "The young lady is safe, so let's get away. There is a fellow somewhere around here that I have got to meet, and the quicker we meet the better it will suit me. Besides, there are two wounded men and a dead one down here that will have to be attended to. Come on, everybody!"

Just as they reached the beaten trail the report of a rifle sounded and a bullet whizzed past our hero's head and buried itself in a bank of sand.

Wild looked in the direction the shot had been fired from and saw a thin streak of smoke curling upward.

Right under the smoke was a bush.

That the villain who had fired the shot was hiding there he was pretty certain.

Taking aim at the lower part of the bush, he pulled the trigger of his rifle.

As the report rang out a man leaped into view.

It was Thundering Ike.

The scoundrel had been shot in the calf of his leg, but he was still anxious to kill Young Wild West.

Dropping upon his knee, he took aim to fire another shot.

But Wild was too quick for him.

Crack!

The rifle fell from the scoundrel's hands and he reeled over backward.

"That's the last of Thunderin' Ike, I reckon," observed Cheyenne Charlie.

There was a short silence and then Jed Warren remarked:

"We left our wagons an' ther rest of ther folks up here a ways. Won't yer wait fur us? We'll all go into ther town of Boilin' Butte together."

"Certainly we will wait for you," Wild answered. The men who were carrying the two wounded villains put them down, along with the body of the man they had lost. The other dead man had been buried in a shallow grave, so there was no further trouble with him.

In a few minutes the wagons came along.

There were six of them.

They were well loaded with household effects, mining implements and women and children.

But room was made for the wounded and dead.

The mining camp was soon reached.

Anna and Eloise were at a window of the hotel, and when they saw that Young Wild West and his companions were with the wagon train people they rushed out to give them a welcome.

Jed Warren told what had happened to him and his friends to a big crowd.

Then it fell upon Wild to tell something.

He told all he thought was necessary and then got Hop Wah to finish.

Well, reader, there is not much more to tell.

Young Wild West and his friends remained at Boiling Butte for about a week.

They saw Con Carney duly installed at a mining claim, working away to amass a fortune, so he could send for the colleen across the sea.

But it was not the sort of a place for our friends.

They believed in mining where they could strike something in a hurry.

Digging out a fortune by degrees was too slow for them.

Besides, since the Highbinders were cleaned out, and the remainder of Thundering Ike's band had left for parts unknown, there was not enough excitement there for them.

So they bade good-by to the place and all the good people in it and turned their faces homeward, arriving there without mishap.

Next week's issue will contain "YOUNG WILD WEST PAYING THE PAWNEES; OR, ARIETTA HELD FOR RANSOM."

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FIGHTING U-BOATS FROM TOWED KITE BALLOONS.

Among other agencies brought to bear on the German submarines is the kite balloon of the type so extensively employed on the fighting fronts. The French navy, in particular, is employing a number of kite balloons with tenders for the purpose of spotting U-boats lurking near the coast and at the entrances to important harbors.

The life of the kite observer at sea is full of thrills, especially during those times when he climbs up to the balloon swinging above the trawler and when he slides down the ropes to the deck of the trawler. It is said of these kite observers that some of their feats in this connection would compare most favorably with those of a trained tight-rope walker. But once in the basket of the balloon, the work is devoid of that excitement which is part and parcel of the work of the land observer. The U-boats can be readily spotted from a height of a few hundred feet, even when they are below the surface of the water, provided the sea is not too choppy and the light conditions are favorable.

BE SAVING OF THE FATS; THEY ARE DOUBLY PRECIOUS.

Fats are the most precious thing in this war. Germany is nearer breaking for want of fats than any other one thing.

Hindenburg himself not long ago gave notice that unless his troops and the munition makers got more fats, something would happen in Germany.

Fats supply energy. When people go hungry they draw on the fats in their bodies. When that is gone, they are an easy prey to disease. Some fats have stuff in them for growth. Without fats, people weaken and waste away.

Our armies use fat by shipload. Glycerin, which

comes from fat, is one of the chief things for making modern explosives. We must have fats to keep up the fight.

Save fats. Do not limit your supplies of milk, table butter and cheese; but consume all. Don't waste any. You can cut the consumption of fats by reducing pastry and fried foods. Use cottonseed or corn oil or peanut oil for cooking. Use drippings.

Trim your own meat and melt the fat. Don't let a scrap get into the garbage pail.

Waste no soap, save the scraps; it's made of fats. Fats that cannot be used for cooking should be saved and made into soft soap.

Our waste of animal fat has been awful. Save it. Cut down your consumption at least one-third of an ounce a day. That is enough to make 400,000 tons a year, if all America saves its fats.

FOOD-SAVING MENUS FOR CREWS IN EFFECT ON 600 U. S. SHIPS.

Operators of more than 600 American steamships have already come into line with the United States Food Administrator's plans for wheat and meat saving aboard vessels plying in the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico. They have promised to adopt menus recently mapped out, at the request of leaders of the principal seamen's unions, by the Food Administration, Department of Commerce, and Shipping Board. The marine labor leaders have already promised that the seamen will do everything in their power to see that the Food Administration's programme is carried out to the letter.

It is impossible yet to estimate accurately the exact saving that may be expected as a result of the new forecandle menus. Officials of the Food Administration and representatives of the seamen, however, believe that it will be possible to effect a reduction of about 50 per cent. in the consumption of wheat, about the same reduction in meat, and possibly 75 per cent. in the amount of pork normally used aboard our merchant ships.

There will be eight wheatless meals every week—and in this case "wheatless" means absolutely without a grain of wheat. There will be one absolutely meatless day each week, and a meatless meal every day. The consumption of pork is cut to what is considered the practicable minimum, only three meals a week containing meat in the form of pork or pork products.

Ships' crews have always been known as heavy consumers of meat, and have never been famous for going lightly with bread, crackers, puddings and pie. The Food Administration expects the saving of these staples so badly needed abroad to run into thousands of tons a month.

DICK DENTON'S SCHOOLDAYS

—OR—

THE WAR OF THE HIGHS AND LOWS

By DICK ELLISON

(A Serial Story.)

CHAPTER XIX (Continued).

Of course, we don't pretend to defend this sort of business, nor that which followed.

Our business is simply to tell what actually took place.

Once at the lake short work was made of night-shirts, and the three Highs stood in the buff.

The gags were now removed, as there was no danger of the cries of the prisoners being heard.

Tom Radwin was furious.

"You fellows will suffer for this outrage!" he roared as soon as he could speak. "Just untie my hands, and I'll learn you! Just give me a show!"

"We gave you just the same kind of show you gave Peekaboo!" retorted Dick. "Better. You were five to one then."

"For heaven's sake don't duck us in that cold water!" pleaded Willets. "My heart is weak. I shall die if you do."

"Your heart is as hard as a stone, you sniveling coward," replied Dick.

But he knew the danger, and the ducking scheme had already been abandoned.

But this the prisoners were not to know yet.

"Into the water you go!" cried Dick.

He and the Greenhorn seized Radwin, Archie and Peekaboo got Sam Willets, while Keno and Scotty took charge of Billy Smith.

Young Bull and the others brought up the rear, peppering the prisoners with pebbles as they were dragged along.

Radwin now seemed disposed to take his medicine quietly, or perhaps he was too badly scared to speak.

Sam just yelled with abject terror while Billy Smith blubbered, and tried to fight the boys off, kicking and squirming as they dragged him down to the water's edge.

"Halt!" cried Dick. "Now, Peekaboo, take your revenge."

"Dey orter go in vater," laughed the Korean, "but so you say no, Dick Denton, me put vater on dem."

The sponges were here; also pails.

Peekaboo dipped up a pail of the icy water, filled his sponge, and went to work on Radwin.

One Willy-boy got washed that time if never before!

Peekaboo gave it to him good and plenty, winding

up by throwing the contents of the pail in his face. "Run for your life, now!" cried Dick, letting go his hold on the prisoner, and thrusting his night-shirt upon him. "Run, Willy! run or you'll get a cold!"

"I don't go till my friends go," gasped Tom, his teeth chattering.

Pat seized a spare pail of water.

"Do as you are told, or you get another dose!" he cried.

This sent Radwin on the run.

The boys then tackled Willets and Billy Smith together, and gave them their dose.

Smith was then sent on the run, but Willets they held.

"Punch him, Peekaboo!" cried Dick. "Just give him one taste of his own medicine. He ought to be in good trim now, after his bath, and the fight will warm him up."

He cut Willets free then, and the boys formed a ring, in the midst of which were the Korean and his tormentor.

For once Sam Willets had to fight fair.

He was nowhere alongside of Peekaboo, who proceeded to polish him off in the most approved style.

Dick called the fight off at the end of the first round, and they turned Willets loose and sent him on the run back to the academy.

All of which Maccaroni took in from the window.

He would have cheered if he had dared.

"And now home!" cried Dick.

It was a race all the way back to the Dudman House.

The pantry window was ready for them, and the boys made their beds without discovery.

At last Peekaboo was avenged.

CHAPTER XX.

DICK AND ARCHIE FIND THEMSELVES IN A BAD PREDICAMENT.

The boys had a great laugh over their midnight raid on the Highs.

Just the same Dick realized that it meant a coun-

ter attack sooner or later, and he cautioned Archie and Young Bull to be on the alert.

"They'll be sure to strike at us," he declared, "and the attack will come when we least expect it. We must be prepared."

Saturday came, and Dick and Archie, declining all invitations for sport, got away about nine o'clock, and started for Old Grim Face.

This was serious business.

Archie had been on the anxious seat ever since the affair on the mountains.

Dick fully sympathized with him, and had sworn to see him through.

But as the days went on Archie had grown less confident that the wild man was his missing parent.

As for Dick, he had no opinion, and he felt very much inclined to doubt whether Archie was capable of forming one unless he could see the wild man face to face.

Just this was the object of that Saturday expedition up Grim Face.

Question was if they could find the cave.

Dick was doubtful on that score, and as for Archie, he frankly admitted that he had very little idea how to go.

"We'll strike for the bridge first," said Dick, "and then see if we can't locate that ledge where the pine trees are. There are not so many pines on Grim Face, and we ought to be able to spot them with my spy-glass."

So they pushed on up the first mountain, passed down into the valley, and came to the bridge.

It was a beautiful winter's day, and not a particle of snow to be seen anywhere, not even on the mountain top.

Thus there was nothing to obstruct the view of the boys or to deceive them in any way.

Yet Dick searched in vain for the pine-covered ledge.

"Strange that I can't see it," he growled. "It can't be so far away, either."

"Let me have a look," said Archie. "Remember we came down the mountain to that place. There may be some spur of rock hiding it from this point of view."

"That's exactly what it is, I suppose," replied Dick. "Take your look, Arch. You may be more fortunate than I. Of course, the pines are up there somewhere."

"I see smoke rising," said Archie at last.

"Where?"

"Do you see where that blasted chestnut tree is—I suppose it is a chestnut."

"Any old nut. I see the tree you mean; yes, and I see the smoke."

"Well?"

"It may be our friend the dwarf cooking his breakfast."

"It is too late for breakfast, but I think we had better move on that smoke, Dick."

"Agreed! I haven't an idea how to go except that

it was to our right, as we stand, and the smoke lies that way, so we will just bust ahead."

They started over the rocks.

"Hold on!" cried Dick, suddenly, "this won't do. Have you forgotten, Arch, that we turned off on that wood road ahead here? We had better go to that, and make our start from there."

"So we did. Yes, it would be better."

"They retraced their steps, and followed the trail till they came to the wood road.

This led nowhere, as the boys had reason to know.

And now things began to straighten out.

"I see where we went," declared Dick, before they had advanced any great distance. "Right there where you see that pile of rocks is where we had the run-in with Young Bull. We went off the trail and ascended higher after we left the fellows."

"That's right. It must have been way up there where we struck the girls."

Archie pointed to a bare projecting ledge, well up on the mountain side.

"That's it," replied Dick. "Don't you remember we saw the lights of the Highs above us? That would be allright. The trail runs over that ledge."

"And the smoke?"

"Don't see it now."

"Nor do I, nor anything of the pines."

They went on a little further, and halted again.

"It's no use to keep this up," said Dick. "I vote we go right up under that ledge, which is surely where we met the girls, then we can get our bearings—see?"

Archie assented. Indeed, he seldom did anything else to whatever Dick proposed.

They climbed to the foot of the ledge, recognizing it as the place where they had met Fannie Follensbee and Lilly Ladd.

"There are the pines!" cried Dick, pointing down into a depression further on.

"That's the place," said Archie, "and the smoke comes from the cave."

Just then a gun was fired, and they could hear voices helling.

"What's all that, I wonder?" queried Dick.

"Blamed if I know," replied Archie. "Seems to be down in the valley. There goes another shot."

"It don't concern us, anyhow," replied Dick. "We are gunning for those pines."

By the time they had reached them the boys were lost in wonder as to how they had ever managed to get the two girls over so rough a road.

They pushed on to the rift, and looked down into the cave.

Here they could see the remains of a fire, but there was no one visible.

Archie was beginning to get excited.

"We must get down there somehow, Dick," he said.

"What about giving the dwarf a call?" asked Dick.

"I wouldn't. It may only have the effect of scaring him away. I think we had better sneak down."

(To be continued.)

CURRENT NEWS

When the patriotism of Chris Roumeliate, a Greek restaurateur of Sioux City, Iowa, was questioned because of his window display of German carp, Chris, who is a veteran of the Balkan wars, wrapped a small American flag around each fish.

Hotels can conserve tin and metal by the use of fiber ware, according to the Hotel World, which reports extensive use of this material for trays, kitchen utensils, pails, fire buckets, cuspidors, waste-paper baskets, champagne coolers, and like articles. The fiber ware is molded into shape from wood pulp under great hydraulic pressure, and given a hard waterproof surface, and so is seamless and sanitary.

Had it not been for the inquisitiveness of S. C. Jensen's tomcat, Teddy, the Jensen store at Menominee, Mich., would have burned to the ground. Jensen several months ago adopted the strange cat and it repaid the debt by calling the attention of a passerby that his store was ablaze. The cat snuffed a burning blanket and scratched vigorously on the front door until a pedestrian investigated and found a blaze in the store, which was closed at the time.

Wisconsin has a law prohibiting the manufacture of skim-milk cheese under certain conditions. At a recent meeting the cheese makers of that State urged that the law be amended to permit the manufacture of skim-milk cheese in the usual shapes during the war, utilizing by-products from butter in the creameries and competing on an even footing with other States which permit the making of skim-milk cheese with proper brands showing its character and penalties for sale in deceptive ways.

Louisiana does a good winter business in strawberries, but has often suffered losses through the waste of overripe berries not suited for shipment even to local markets. A farmers' association at Hammond, that State says the Manufacturer's Record, recently negotiated with a New York manufacturer of cordials and extracts, securing a small preserving factory, which was quartered in an old iron foundry, and will take all overripe berries at nine cents per quart, besides giving employment to local workers. This factory will also can and preserve wild blackberries in that section after the strawberry season closes.

Under the guidance of the Federal Food Administrator for the State of Washington, Charles Heberd, retail grocers in that section, have established two corn-meal days each week, Mondays and Tues-

days, when they sell corn meal for cost on the basis of a 10-pound sack for fifty cents, delivered free on Monday with a \$1.50 order. In some instances this price is below actual cost to dealers, but the plan has been taken up enthusiastically in that territory. The Tuesday price is sixty cents per 10-pound sack, delivered free with a \$1.50 order. This plan was inaugurated at a meeting of grocers in Everett, Wash., where the regular lunch was replaced by a meal of hot corn-meal mush and milk.

A recent dispatch states that the greatest school of war the American army has ever known, and one which, when it is in full swing, will probably be the greatest single school of any army, has begun operations somewhere in France. When the school is in full progress, it will have more than 10,000 students in training. There are in operation schools for trench mortar work, anti-aircraft artillery, anti-aircraft machine gun operations and sanitary work. Out of the school will be turned complete units which will be attached to the different divisions of the army. It includes also an army candidate school for considering non-commissioned officers and examining them as to their fitness for commissions. It is from this school, when the American army is in full action, that officers will be drawn to replace those fallen in battle.

The Schneider-Creusot works, the ammunition works where the greatest number of the famous French 75 mm. guns are made, covers a total area of 15,000 acres, 150 of which are used for buildings. To connect the different parts of the big plant 180 miles of railroad track are needed and 65 locomotives and 5,700 cars. A total of 116,000 horsepower is employed in operating the works of which 4,600 horse-power is electric. This plant has 80,000 employees and 4,200 machine tools are in operation. One of these is 160 feet long. Outside the Schneider-Creusot works, France has, of course, a great number of other important armament plants. Several of these are entirely new. The 75 mm. gun will shoot as many as 16 shells a minute and there are guns which have fired 2,000 shells a day. This means that 4,000 to 5,000 men will have to be continually on the job to make the shells needed for eight guns only. Of course, it happens very rarely that one gun is called upon for such an achievement; but it is generally said that the French fired during the battle of the Marne at least 150,000 shells, weighing approximately 1,350 tons. A factory equipment costing approximately \$50,000 is required to turn out 100,000 rifle cartridges a day, enough for a regiment of men for a day's battle.

FROM COLLEGE TO MEXICO

—OR—

THE WHITE GIRL QUEEN OF THE YAQUIS

By "PAWNEE JACK"

(A SERIAL STORY)

CHAPTER XIII (Continued).

"We had better surrender, Bob!" said Tom.

"Yes, I guess so," reluctantly.

"Up with your hands, then, old fellow."

They elevated their hands, at once, and the Yaquis, when they saw this action, jabbered excitedly and nodded their heads violently.

"That seems to meet with their approval, Tim," said Bob.

"Yes."

Then a couple of the Yaquis advanced and bound the arms of the two together, behind their backs.

This done, the Yaquis looked into the cabin and saw the two Mexicans.

The savages jabbered and gesticulated at a great rate.

"I guess they don't know what to think of our having those two fellows prisoners, Tom."

"That's it, I guess."

Then Tom addressed the Yaquis, saying:

"Do any of you understand or speak English?"

The Yaquis looked wonderingly at Tom, and shook their heads and jabbered faster than ever.

"They don't speak United States, Tom," said Bob.

"No, I guess not."

"That is bad."

"Yes, bad for us."

The Yaquis jabbered and gesticulated a while, and then the four prisoners were taken ashore and hustled away through the timber. But two of the Yaquis remained near the sloop, evidently to keep watch over it.

A walk of a little more than an hour, up into the mountains, brought the party to an encampment, or rather a village, for there were perhaps fifteen or twenty huts made out of sticks and brush.

There was one log house of goodly size, and Tom and Bob guessed that it was the home of the chief of this band of Yaquis.

The four prisoners were placed in an untenanted hut, and a guard of two Yaquis placed over them.

"Well, I wonder what will happen to us next?" remarked Bob.

"Hard telling," replied Tom.

"Jove, I don't like the looks of these big savages!"

"Neither do I."

"They look as if they were capable of doing all

the terrible things that we have heard they sometimes do."

"They certainly do."

"I wish that some of them understood the United States language."

"Yes, it would be a satisfaction to argue the matter with them, at any rate."

The Mexicans were conversing in low tones, in their language, and if the look on their faces was anything to judge by they were feeling as much cast down as was the case with the two American youths.

"Say, do you fellows know anything about these Yaquis?" asked Bob, presently.

"Not much," replied one of the greasers. "We have heard that de Yaquis are mighty bad men."

"So have we," grimly.

"They kill people if they take the notion."

"Yes, more, they torture them, I understand."

"Yes, I guess so."

"Jove, Tom, we must get out of here, somehow!" said Bob.

Tom shook his head, slowly, a dubious look on his face.

"Yes, but how?" he queried.

"That is the question."

"Let's do some thinking."

"That is easy enough; but to do some thinking that will be of value, or effective in assisting us to get away—that is a different matter."

"Yes, so it is."

Bob then tugged at his bonds, but was unable to loosen them.

"They are too tight," he said. "I couldn't get them loose in a hundred years."

"Mine are the same," said Tom.

"Those Yaquis certainly know how to truss a fellow up."

"You are right."

Presently a sort of monotonous chanting came to the hearing of the prisoners.

"What's that?" queried Bob.

Tom shook his head.

"You can't prove it by me," he said.

"It's a Yaqui belle singing a love song, likely," said Bob.

"It worse dan dat," said one of the Mexicans, his face pale.

"You know what it is?" in surprise.

"I have heard that when the Yaquis intend to kill captives, dey sing like that," was the reply, in a voice which trembled somewhat.

"Say, you don't mean it!" gasped Bob.

"Yes, dat right," from the other.

"Then the savages are singing our death-song, eh?"

"That's about it," with a nod.

Tom and Bob exchanged glances of dismay.

Could this be true? Were the Yaquis indeed singing the death-song of the prisoners?

"Say, I wish I was back at old Hillcrest, Tom!" said Bob, lugubriously.

"Well, I believe I would rather be there than in our present position, Bob."

"I wonder what particular brand of torture they will hand out to us, Tom?"

"Hard telling, old fellow."

"I wonder—if they—if they burn people at the stake, like the American Indians?"

"No telling."

"It is possible that they do."

"Yes, and if they don't they may have something worse."

"Well, I don't know what could be any worse."

"It is impossible to figure out what savages might think of in the way of torture, Bob."

"Well, I'm not going to try. I'll wait and see."

The chanting continued. At times it was so low they could scarcely hear it, and then it would swell and grow louder, and the hearer shuddered.

"I wish they'd stop!" growled Bob.

"That would mean that we would be getting nearer to the torture-point, Bob."

"That's true; I never thought of that. I believe I would rather that they keep on chanting all day."

"That would suit me."

"Yes, let dem sing," said one of the Mexicans.

But the chanting ceased presently, and all was silence for nearly an hour.

Then a half-dozen Yaquis entered the hut and dragged the prisoners forth.

They were conducted to an open space near the center of the village, where the savages, men and women and children, were gathered in a large circle.

"I don't see any implements of torture, Tom," said Bob, in a low voice.

"No, but they may have them somewhere around."

"That's so."

The Yaquis were silent as the prisoners were conducted into the circle, and remained silent when the prisoners, in accordance with a gesture, seated themselves on the ground.

The prisoners looked wonderingly and somewhat fearfully around at the faces of the savages, and they could not help acknowledging to themselves, that they were in the hands of about as dangerous-looking savages as could be found anywhere in the world.

There was silence for a few minutes, and then Bob said, querulously.

"Say, I wish they would do something! This suspense is getting on my nerves."

"It's the same way with me, Bob, and—great guns! Look yonder!"

Tom was looking toward the log house, and Bob turned his head and looked in the same direction.

His underjaw dropped, for coming toward the circle of savages, from the open door of the house, was—a beautiful white girl of perhaps eighteen years!

CHAPTER XIV.

THE WHITE GIRL QUEEN.

"Well, wouldn't that surprise you?" gasped Bob.

"I should say so!" from Tom.

"W'at does dat mean, hey?" from one of the Mexicans.

The other shook his head.

"I can't tell," he replied.

The savages made way for the girl, and bowed their heads in token of respect as she passed, and she entered the circle and paused in front of the prisoners, whom she looked at with interest, especially Tom and Bob.

"You are Americans, are you not?" she asked, in good English, addressing the youths.

"We are," they replied in unison.

"And these other two are Mexicans." She stated this as a fact, and they bowed their heads.

She turned away from the Mexicans and faced the two youths squarely. They were looking at her with undisguised wonder, interest and admiration. And no wonder, for the girl was very pretty, and then the amazing part of it was the fact of her being here, among these savages.

"You are wondering because of my presence here," she said, with a smile. "Is it not so?"

"It is," acknowledged Tom. "We cannot but wonder, for it seems a very strange thing. I assure you."

"It is simple enough, when you know all. My father was an American. He came down here to look for gold, and was captured by these people. One of the Yaqui women—she was young and pretty, and the queen of the tribe—interceded and saved my father's life, and he married her. I am the only child. My father and mother are both dead now, and I am the queen of the Yaquis. My name is Lucia."

"We are indeed glad to make your acquaintance, Miss Lucia," said Tom, earnestly.

"Yes, indeed," from Bob.

"My name is Tom Archer," said Tom.

"And mine is Bob Wilson."

"I am glad to know you; and I am glad that you are here."

Bob laughed whimsically, and said:

"I can't say that I am glad, Miss Lucia. You see, we are prisoners, and that makes a difference."

(To be continued.)

INTERESTING TOPICS

FOUR-YEAR-OLD BOY DEFIES AIR RAIDERS.

The barbarism of the enemy in its continued air raids on innocent victims was offset in London recently by a four-year-old boy who refused to be frightened by the murderous attack.

The boy and his grandmother were sheltering in a passage when a bomb demolished the upper portion of the house. Debris rained down on them and they were almost buried. As they were being rescued the boy looked up at his grandmother and said:

"I was brave, wasn't I, granny? They can't make me cry."

The baby daughter of a policeman who lived on the ground floor opposite where a bomb fell was killed, and her sister, aged about four, was seriously injured. Another little girl in a flat a few doors away was injured. A horse was killed in a stable near by.

ENCOURAGE THE BOYS.

Mothers would find their sons much easier entertained at home if they would encourage them in some peculiar hobby, and forgive the little extra trouble that the brushing up afterwards gives them. The encouraging of a hobby certainly implies self-sacrifice on the part of the mother, but, if she is wise, she will give her boy a corner of the home as his own den, where he can stow his property, make as much litter as he chooses, and work out at his leisure the pursuit of his harmless hobby.

Perhaps it may take him many hours, days, even months, to turn a soap box into a corner cupboard, or a few boards into a flower stand, but do not laugh at the work of art when it is finished. Praise it rather. It is better for a boy to do such things in his odd hours than spend his evenings with rough boys, perhaps learning to swear, drink or even gamble.

CONVICT'S FORTUNE DOUBLES.

Although Alphonse J. Stephani has a fortune of more than \$100,000, he can spend only \$50 a month. Stephani is a life-time convict at the New York Dannemora State Hospital for the Criminal Insane. His fortune during the last fifteen years he has been behind prison bars has increased from \$50,000 to \$123,488, it was disclosed recently in the Supreme Court when a representative of the law firm of Hughes, Rounds, Schurp, Schurman & Dwight applied to Justice Whitaker for an order that would permit the Equitable Trust Company to pay the firm \$200 for legal services in preparing an account of the estate.

Stephani in 1890, when twenty-five years old, killed Clinton Reynolds, a lawyer, who was handling his father's estate. He was convicted of murder

and sent to Sing Sing for life. Later he was adjudged insane and sent to Dannemora. His mother died in 1902, leaving him \$50,000.

Several efforts to have Stephani released have proved futile and under the law he can spend only \$50 a month as long as he is a prisoner.

FRENCH WRECKERS OF GERMAN DEFENSES.

Correspondents on the Western front have been telling us of late that the French army has set aside part of its artillery for wrecking purposes exclusively. When an offensive operation is decided upon, the commander of the artillerie de demolition is called into consultation, and to him is entrusted the task of pulverizing and blasting and burying the German works which stand in the way of the attacking poilus.

For these wrecking activities the wrecker-in-chief brings up whatever pieces of artillery he deems necessary. They are installed in position with relation to the enemy lines, while railroads are laid and depots are erected for the handling and storing of shells and powder. Meanwhile the air service supplies the chief wrecker with aerial photographs of the territory to be treated; and when the fire of hundreds of massed guns is turned on this territory, the aerial photographers continually report the progress of destruction. Such points which hold out longest are subjected to concentrated shelling.

CAPTAIN DEATH.

In the month of December, 1756, the Terrible privateer, of twenty-six guns and two hundred men, commanded by Captain William Death, engaged the Grand Alexander, a French vessel of four hundred tons, twenty-two guns, and one hundred men; after a smart fight of two hours and a half, in which Captain Death's brother and sixteen of his men were killed, he took her and put forty men on board. A few days later, the Vengeance privateer of St. Maloes, thirty-six guns and three hundred and sixty men, bore down upon her and retook the prize. The Vengeance and the prize then both attacked the Terrible, which was between them, and shot away her mainmast at the first broadside. One of the most desperate engagements ever recorded ensued. It lasted one hour and a half. Mons. Bourdas, the French captain, his lieutenant, and nearly all the crew, on the one side; and Captain Death, almost all his officers, and the greater part of the crew, on the other side, were killed.

As soon as the heroic feat was known in England, a subscription was set on foot, which produced a very handsome sum for the widow of Captain Death and for the surviving seamen of the gallant crew.

WILD WEST WEEKLY

NEW YORK, MARCH 15, 1918.

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GOOD CURRENT NEWS ARTICLES

Mrs. Orville Miller, who lives six miles in the country, walked to Dixon, Ill., the other day, having no other way to get to town. She went to the Red Cross shop, where she obtained yarn for knitting for the soldiers, and then procured a 100 per cent. flag; then she walked back home. There are eight children in this mother's family.

Introducing George McGuire, the world's most patient, most persistent and most easily satisfied man. After twenty-five years' consideration of his application for a place as cemetery watchman at \$40 a month, the Government appointed him. He quit the temporary \$60 a month job he has held at the Interior Department, Washington, D. C., for a quarter of a century and accepted.

The New Ocean House at Swampscott, Mass., with its annex and several cottages, has been taken by the government and will be converted into a reconstructive hospital. Whether the institution will be used solely for convalescents returned from overseas or devoted to the use of the men of the National Army remaining in this country, has not been announced. The main structure, as it now stands, will accommodate 375 guests, while half as many more are annually taken care of in the annex and cottages. It is likely, however, that this capacity as a hospital will be greatly increased and possibly doubled.

John Grant, a shepherd, was found dead in his cabin fourteen miles northeast of Bozeman, Mont. He had evidently been dead for several days, and but for the strange actions of his dogs, his body might still be lying undiscovered. When the cabin was approached one of the dogs on the outside mounted guard and refused to let any one enter the cabin until he first had been made prisoner. Inside the cabin another dog stood guard over the body and had evidently been acting as sentinel since his master's death.

Capt. Franz von Rintelen, relative of the Kaiser, was found guilty in the United States District Court at New York on February 5th of conspiracy to destroy a British steamship in the spring of 1915 by placing fire bombs in her hold at a time when she was moored at a pier in Brooklyn. Ten other men of the total of sixteen named in the Federal indictment also were found guilty. Judge Harland B. Howe sentenced each of the defendants to the maximum provided by Congress eighteen months' imprisonment at hard labor, a fine of \$2,000 and costs of the prosecution. He expressed regret that he was unable under the law to pass more severe sentences. In specially referring to the case of Von Rintelen Judge Howe said that if he were sentenced for life, if not to forfeit life, the punishment would not be too severe.

GRINS AND CHUCKLES

"He always was a bad egg, but nobody seemed to notice it, while he was rich." "Yes, he was all right until he was broke."

Elocutionist—Strike for your altars and your fires! Strike! Till the last armed foe— Fan— Dat's two strikes, mister! One more an' yer out.

"My husband has a terrible attack of grip." "What are you doing for him?" "Nothing. He has his life insured for sixty thousand dollars."

"I understand that after waiting twenty years she married a struggling man?" "Yes, poor chap! He struggled the best he knew how, but she landed him."

Weary Clerk—Have you any fountain pens that won't blot when they are nearly empty? Dealer—Why, sir, I have fountain pens that won't blot when they are entirely empty.

Crabshaw—If you insist on this new gown I'll have to get it on credit. Mrs. Crabshaw—As long as it's going to be charged, dear, I may as well get a more expensive one.

First Boarder—Smith must be behind in his board. Second Boarder—What makes you think that? First Boarder—I notice he's had the neck of the chicken for the last three Sundays.

Rube—Where's yer boy naow? Josh—He's in New York. Rube—Which side's he on by this time? Josh—What d'yer mean? Rube—Is he sellin' gold bricks a'ready or buyin' 'em yet?

"If you are looking for bargains," said the broker, "I can suit you. I can offer you some stocks at ten cents a share." "But why are they so cheap?" demanded the lady shopper. "You see, they have been slightly damaged by water."

AN AWFUL COLLISION.

By Horace Appleton

I ran an engine on that same Gulfport & Bilford road.

I suppose Baisley remembers Colonel Pinkerton? Baisley remembered him perfectly, though the gentleman had not come into power in his time.

The colonel was about as reckless a man as one would be likely to find, even in a day's journey in the "Paradise of Rogues."

He had been president of a bank somewhere in the North, and in due time became the president of the railroad company.

In his younger days he had partly learned the trade of a machinist, and in consequence he believed that he knew more about a locomotive than any other man on the road.

He was mad if a train was two minutes behind time, and as he had appointed all the conductors himself, he charges the blame upon the engineers.

He lived at Buckvale, where he had a very nice place, built on the line of the road, so that he could tell at what time every train passed it.

"Romsey, you are late," said Colonel Pinkerton to me one morning as I stopped my train at the Buckvale station.

"Two minutes, sir," I replied meekly, as I looked at my watch.

"Five minutes!" retorted the colonel sharply.

"It is only two minutes by my watch, which was right by the company's time in Bilford this morning."

"Don't contradict me, Romsey! You have said enough! There is a better man than you are that wants your place," he continued, as he turned on his heel and left me."

I knew about this man that wanted my place.

He was a relative of Fling, the conductor on my train.

He had been sent for when he was not needed because he was out of a job at home, and men were more plenty in that State than in Baisley's time.

I could not afford to lose my situation, and for this reason I "ate dirt" more than is natural for me.

The next day I came into Buckvale on the moment.

Colonel Pinkerton was at the water tank with his watch in his hand. He and Fling were on the best of terms; and I know that both of them were anxious to make a place for the newcomer. But I had the good-will and support of all the engineers, and they knew it was not prudent to discharge me without some show of reason.

"You are three minutes behind time, Romsey," said the colonel, with a heavy frown on his face.

"I thought I was exactly on the moment," I ventured to reply.

"I say you are three minutes late."

"Will you be so kind as to give me the exact time, Colonel Pinkerton? I think your time differs from

that of the company at Bilford," I continued very respectfully.

"I have the right time; and it is your duty to have it also," he replied, putting up his watch, and walking away.

But of course I could see that his time was three minutes faster than mine.

As it was, I was three minutes ahead of the up train, which usually took the siding for my train to pass it at this station.

"What time are you, Mr. Fling?" I asked the conductor, before we left Bilford the next morning.

"Eleven minutes of seven," he answered, after consulting his watch.

"You are three minutes fast," I added.

"I am just right," he persisted, hurrying away from me as though he did not wish to have the difference between our watches investigated.

It seemed to me that he was a party to the president's plan for getting rid of me. But I noticed that he gave me the signal to start three minutes late by his own watch, though by the right time, according to my own.

"Make all the steam you can, Blunt," I said to the fireman as I pulled out the throttle.

I kept on all the pressure my gauge would allow, and reached my first stopping place five minutes ahead of my own time.

It was but three miles more to Buckvale, but Fling did not give the word for me to start till three minutes behind the time by my watch.

I could see no reason for this delay, and I don't think there was any.

I crowded the machine to the utmost of its capacity, for I had an upgrade against me, and a rather heavy train.

I stopped the engine at Buckvale just three and a half minutes ahead of the true time.

"You are ahead of your time, and that's worse than being behind," growled Colonel Pinkerton, evidently disappointed.

"I thought I must be about right by your time, sir," I replied.

"I don't want any words about it," snapped he. "There is a lady on this train who has to take a steamer at Gulfport five minutes after it is due there; if you are late it will be the last train you ever run on this road," continued the colonel. "Now go ahead, and don't lose another minute here."

"I haven't the conductor's signal to start yet," I remonstrated.

"You have my order! Start your engine!" roared the president, who was in the worst humor possible.

"But the up train has not arrived yet, sir," I suggested, appalled at the idea of going ahead while the other train was entitled to the track.

"Are you the president of this road, or am I?" demanded the colonel.

"Certainly I am not the president."

"I am; and every man on the road obeys me, or he leaves at once."

At this moment Fling appeared with his watch in his hand.

He seemed in doubt, but in a moment more he gave the order to start.

The up train was certainly late.

It was usually on the siding when I came in.

"We haven't waited five minutes for the up train, Mr. Fling," I objected, when I saw the signal.

"Yes, we have; just five minutes," he replied, looking at his watch again.

"Time up; will you go ahead, Romsey?" demanded the conductor, who felt that he was acting in the presence of the president.

"No, sir; I will not!" I answered decidedly. "I will not cause a collision when I know better."

"Very well, Romsey! You are discharged for disobedience of orders! The engineers don't run this road," interposed Colonel Pinkerton. "Here, Walker, jump into that cab and run this train down to Gulfport."

This remark was addressed to the man who had come down as the relative of the conductor to obtain my situation.

"Colonel Pinkerton, I heard that your son was on the up train, and if you mean to kill him and the lady you spoke of, you will do it," I had the pluck to say as I stepped off the footboard.

"None of your impudence, Romsey! If you work on this road you must obey orders," answered the president, as he jumped upon the forward car, as it came up to the spot.

I had something more to say to him, and I followed him into the car.

I did not think the train would go far, and I hoped the new engineer would hear the up train in season to stop his machine and avoid a collision.

As I had been discharged I gave Colonel Pinkerton a liberal piece of my mind in the presence of the passengers.

He was mad, and they were indignant at my plain use of words.

I told them the president was risking the life of every person on board of the train to oblige the lady to whom he was engaged to be married.

He was a widower, with one son, and it seemed that he intended to accompany his lady down to Gulfport.

His son was a lad of ten, whom I knew well, for he often came to see me on the engine.

The passengers threatened to lynch me for what I had said to the colonel.

Before I was aware that they meant what they said, half a dozen of them seized me in such a way that I could not defend myself.

In spite of my struggles they hurled me from the platform of the rear car, to which I had followed the colonel, into a sand bank at the side of the road.

Fortunately it was a sand bank, and the train had slowed down considerably in rounding a curve, and I was not harmed by my fall.

I regained my feet, but I had hardly done so before I heard an awful crash.

The train from which I had been so unceremoniously cast had come into collision with the up train.

I hastened forward as fast as possible, though I found I was very stiff from the effects of my fall.

The two trains had struck each other just beyond the curve.

There was nothing to be seen of either of them but a mass of ruins.

Before I reached the spot I saw Blunt limping towards the scene of the disaster.

He had seen the approaching train, and had leaped from the engine on the instant.

He was not very badly injured, and he walked with me to the wreck.

I should say that one-half of the passengers were either killed or badly wounded.

About a dozen seemed to be uninjured, though I could not see how a single one escaped instant death.

Walker, the new engineer, was killed, but both the engineer and fireman had leaped from the machine on the up train.

I looked among the ruins for Henry Pinkerton, the president's son.

I found him with a leg and an arm broken.

His father was terribly battered; but his life was saved, leaving him a cripple for the rest of his days.

Miss Clifford, the lady to whom the colonel was engaged, was killed, and probably did not know what hurt her.

I worked with all my might for four hours, and till the next train for Bilford came along.

I helped out from the pile of ruins that held them down, several of the passengers who had assisted in throwing me from the train.

They had changed their tone.

The indignation against the colonel and Fling was very bitter when all the facts came out, and I was a sort of lion for a while.

The president was deposed at once, and I was restored to my situation.

I was called upon no more to eat dirt on that road, and the president was always rightfully regarded as the author of "An Awful Collision."

BEAR MOTHER EATS CUBS.

The tragedy apprehended has happened. Nellie, the bear at Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, Cal., has gobbled up the family which but recently she presented to the San Francisco public.

Nellie, though admirable as she-bears go, shares many of the unfortunate propensities of such creatures in confinement. One of those propensities is a weakness for devouring their young.

Nellie has erred in that direction aforetime. On this last occasion, however, every precaution was taken—every inducement extended—to deflect her from such a terrible deed.

"We gave her all the raw meat she could eat," explained Park Superintendent John McLaren, "but unfortunately it was no use at all."

FROM ALL POINTS

AIR MAIL LINE FOR FRANCE AND ENGLAND.

According to the London daily press, it is learned from semi-official sources that an airplane postal service between France and England is to be realized in the near future.

It is considered that a service of this kind would be of great value during the war, especially in view of the fact that the members of the interallied committee, sitting at Versailles, could in this way be put into rapid communication with the war office and with the British government.

The idea of the project comes from the French authorities, who delegated M. Flavon to England to consult with the air board and arrange the preliminary matters.

At the same time the director of the postal services was instructed to negotiate with the post-office for the necessary agreements which were to be drawn up concerning the proposed airplane service. It is stated that the project is practically agreed on.

CARUSO PAYS \$59,000 INCOME TAX.

Enrico Caruso, the famous Italian tenor, went to the Internal Revenue Office recently and made out a check for \$59,000, which he handed to Collector Edwards in payment of his income tax.

The amount was not divulged by Mr. Edwards, as it is unlawful for him to do so.

"Last year, Mr. Caruso paid \$4,000 too much," said Collector Edwards, "and this year we were able to save him about \$5,600 by carefully going over the figures, and \$600 because of the advance payment.

"Mr. Caruso's tax is a good deal of money to hand over to the government, because, although he is a big donor to the Red Cross, he is a non-resident alien and there are now deductions or exemptions allowed," said Mr. Edwards.

In his dressing-room at the Metropolitan Opera House the singer said:

"I am glad it is done. If anything happens to me now the money belongs to the United States government, and that is good."

SQUAWS KNIT.

Washington County, Okla., Indians, members of the Cherokee and Delaware tribes, are doing as much to help win the war as are their "paleface" brothers and sisters. This is also true of the members of the Osage tribe, the wealthiest Indians in the world.

While hundreds of young Indians of draft age have enlisted or been drafted, the older men of the tribes too old to go to war are contributing generously to all war work in a financial way.

But it remained for many old Indian women to

get into the war relief movement by helping in the Red Cross work. While many Indian women, past the half-century mark in age, are making surgical dressings, others are knitting sweaters, socks and scarfs for the soldiers.

"Umh, me help—me don't like Churmans," said an old Cherokee woman at the court house the other day. And she began to speed up in her work of making a sweater. Oklahoma Indians are giving up many pleasures because Uncle Sam has told them he needs their help.

PROPER CARE OF YOUR WATCH.

If we could bear in mind that each watch contains more than two hundred parts, most of them invisible to the naked eye, and that the balance vibrates 1,800 times an hour, we might be inclined to blame lack of care instead of poor quality of the timepiece when an unreasonable number of minutes are gained or lost. Good results in correct time-recording can be obtained by observing a few simple rules, writes A. K. Hamilton in the *Illustrated World*, Chicago.

Wind your watch at the same time every day, if possible, where it can be compared with and regulated by a standard chronometer. It is better to wind it twice a day, but this is of no benefit unless it be done regularly. Absent-mindedly turning the stem at frequent intervals during the day is harmful. When winding hold the watch still and turn the stem at an even rate. The last few turns should be made slowly to avoid a jarring strain on the spring at the end of the operation.

A lower pocket is the best in which to carry your timepiece. The temperature of the upper vest pockets is apt to be lower and they also subject it to more changes of position. Use the chamois bag furnished by the jeweler unless you have a watch pocket lined with a similar material. Besides protecting the case the friction of a rough surface saves it from many abrupt shifts due to sudden movements of the body. The vest pocket is a better resting place at night than under a pillow. This keeps the watch in the same position throughout the twenty-four hours, but the vest should not be exposed to great changes of temperature.

It is best not to open the back of your watch at all, but never do it out of doors, where dust and grit may fly in. Tobacco ashes are just as bad. If there are any repairs to be made consult a watchmaker. Some watches may run for years without going to the shop, but they should be oiled at regular intervals. One-tenth of a drop will lubricate it, but this tiny amount is as necessary as the greater quantity the auto demands. Don't get a cheap watch and bang it around; you may forget some day and try the same tactics on an expensive one.

A FEW GOOD ITEMS

GRANDMOTHER AT THE AGE OF 34.

Mrs. Laura Cook of Terre Haute, Ind., believes she is the youngest grandmother in Indiana, a son having been born to her son when she is but thirty-four. Her son Owen is eighteen and his wife is not yet eighteen. The father of the baby is an employee of the Coal Valley Mining Company.

PREFERS PENITENTIARY.

Detective Headquarters were surprised when Charles Peterson, sixty-five years old, shambled up to a Sergeant and begged to be sent to the penitentiary at Jackson, Mich.

The man had "done" twenty-nine years on a charge he never recognized. His "home," around which moved his only thoughts of shelter and of food, was within the stern walls of the penitentiary at Jackson.

Peterson, when given his liberty, desperately strained to regain his lost art of living, but, snatched from a former generation at his prime, he could not keep step with the "mechanical age," so he turned in bewilderment back to the penitentiary.

BALDHEADS EXEMPT.

The obvious target that a bald head offers to Teuton sharpshooters was assigned by an army officer of St. Louis, Mo., as a vital reason why men minus hair on their heads should be exempted from military service unless they can be used in some branch that does not call for exposure to the enemy.

Capt. C. E. Jenkins, in charge of an Ambulance Company at Camp Funston, gave this advice when speaking to members of the local exemption boards:

"Bald-headed men are not altogether welcome," Capt. Jenkins said. "They present a shining target for the enemy and besides they cannot withstand cold. They would make admirable decoys, but thus far we have not felt the need of using hairless heads for that purpose."

SOUTH SEA ISLAND FOR HONEYMOON.

To dream away the long summer days beneath the waving palm-trees, on an uninhabited isle far away from civilization, is the honeymoon that appeals to Ross Carpenter, Seattle business man, and his bride-to-be, a New Zealand girl. They plan to meet in Honolulu this spring to be wedded and then hope to find seclusion on a South Sea island, where man travels not.

Carpenter so expressed his quest in a letter to the Hawaii Promotion Committee asking information if Hawaii can provide such an Eden as he seeks.

"We have planned a rather unusual honeymoon," he says. "We wish to find some wild, unfrequented spot for the summer—a la Adam and Eve. (I un-

derstand there are no serpents in the Hawaiian islands.) It would be so romantic if we could discover an uninhabited island, or at least some portion of the seacoast of the Hawaiian group which would be sufficiently isolated for such an adventure."

Carpenter's brother in Los Angeles, Dr. Carpenter, is director of the weather bureau there, it is said.

THE ESCURIAL.

The Escorial, the palace of the Spanish kings, has been termed the eighth wonder of the world. Situated twenty-five miles to the northwest of Madrid and near the top of a mountain, it has a commanding position and may be seen for many miles in every direction. Begun by Philip II. in 1563, it was finished in 1586 at an outlay of fifty million dollars. It was built to fulfil a vow made by Philip II. that if successful in battle with the French he would erect the most magnificent monastery in the world.

The battle of St. Quentin was fought on August 10, 1557, the feast of St. Lawrence, and the monastery buildings commenced in fulfilment of the vow took, in honor of St. Lawrence, the form of a gridiron, as on this implement the saint is reported to have suffered martyrdom. Seventeen ranges of buildings, crossing each other at right angles, form the ribs of the gridiron, while a quadrangular structure, completely enclosing the interior of the buildings, forms the outer portion, and a wing four hundred and seventy feet long is the handle.

The size of the building is enormous, being seven hundred feet from north to south, and five hundred and eighty feet from east to west; the square towers at each corner are two hundred feet high. Within this monstrous structure are contained the king's palace, a cathedral, a monastery of two hundred cells, two colleges, three chapter houses, three library buildings, five large halls, six dormitories, three hospitals, and nearly three thousand other rooms. It is entered by fourteen great gates and lighted by eleven hundred outer and fifteen hundred and seventy-eight inner windows.

The great church is in imitation of St. Peter's at Rome, and some idea of the structure of which it is a part may be gained from the information that the church is three hundred and sixty-four feet long, and two hundred and forty feet across the transepts; the dome is three hundred and thirty feet high; there are forty chapels in its interior, and the grand altar is ninety feet high and fifty feet wide. Underneath the altar is a vault where all the kings of Spain since Charles V. have been laid. Built in the time of Spain's glory, the Escorial remains the most striking monument of Spanish wealth and power.

PHANTOM CARDS.

From five cards three are mentally selected by any one, placed under an ordinary handkerchief, performer withdraws two cards; the ones not selected; the performer invites any one to remove the other two, and to the great astonishment of all they have actually disappeared. No sleight-of-hand. Recommended as the most ingenious card trick ever invented. Price 10c. by mail.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d St., New York City.

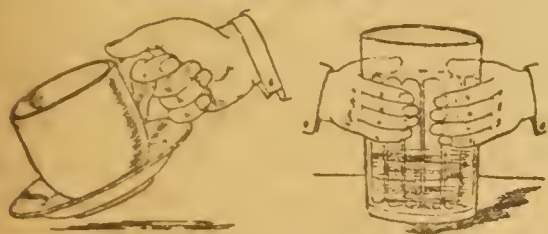
AUTOMOBILE PUZZLE.



This little steel puzzle is one of the most perplexing on the market, and yet when you master it a child could do it. It measures 1 1/2 by 4 inches. The trick is to spell out words as indicated on the cut. Price 15 cents each, by mail, postpaid.

Wolff Novelty Co., 168 W. 23d St., N. Y.

RUBBER SUCKER.



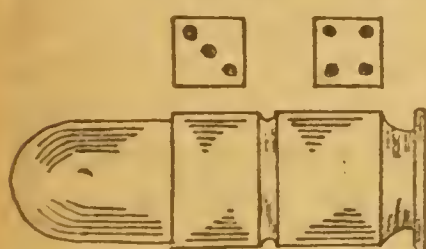
Rubber Vacuum Suckers

The latest novelty out! Dishes and plates will stick to the table, cups to the saucers like glue. Put one under a glass and then try to lift it. You can't. Lots of fun. Always put it on a smooth surface and wet the rubber. Many other tricks can be accomplished with this novelty.

Price, 12 cts. each by mail, postpaid.

C. BEHR, 150 W. 62d Street, N. Y.

DICE BULLET.



This Bullet and contents will afford you lots of "game." Not, however, the kind of game usually "got" with bullets. The illustration may suggest the idea. This little novelty consists of a real shell fitted with a hollow "bullet," and contains two small bone dice. This will make a very acceptable gift to any of your soldier friends. Each 15 cents, by mail, postpaid.

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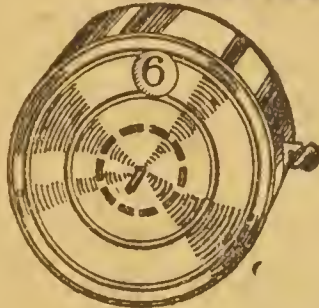
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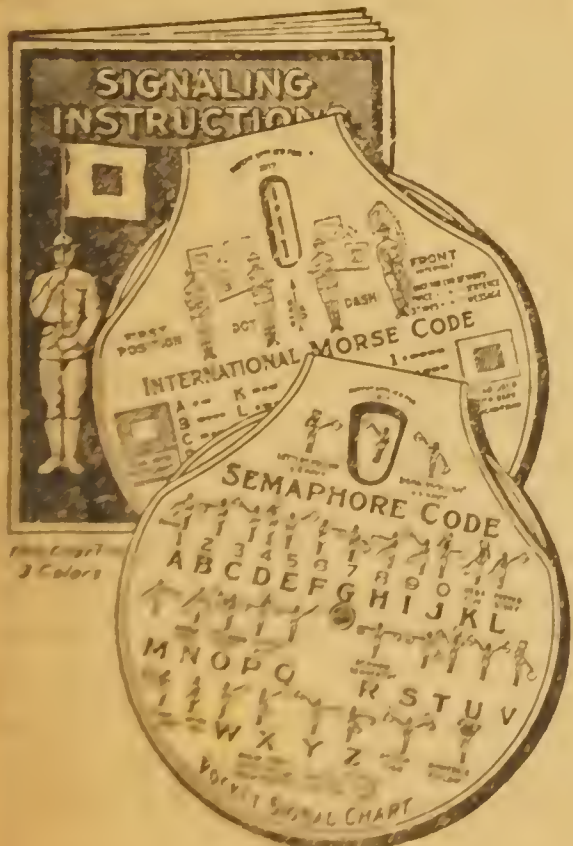
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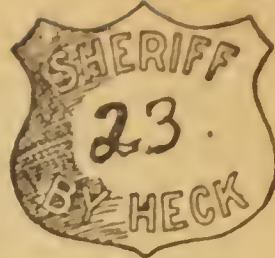
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